

Hafizullah Emadi

DYNAMICS
OF POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT IN
AFGHANISTAN

THE BRITISH, RUSSIAN,
AND AMERICAN INVASIONS



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Dedicated to the memory of my brother Habibullah.

CONTENTS

List of Tables	viii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Chronology	xiii
Introduction	1
1 Reform and Rebellion in Postindependence	11
2 Dawn of Political Liberalization	49
3 Military Putsch and Regime Change	87
4 State, Imperialism, and Dissident Movements	127
5 Mujahidin, Civil War, and the Taliban	167
6 Post-Taliban Politics of Reconstruction	205
Glossary	249
Notes	253
Bibliography	267
Index	277

TABLES

2.1	U.S. and USSR loan and economic assistance, 1949–1972 (in millions of dollars)	84
3.1	U.S. and USSR economic assistance to Afghanistan, 1973–1977 (in millions of dollars)	96
4.1	Major Sunni political parties in the 1980s and 1990s	137
4.2	Major Shia Islamic parties in the 1980s and 1990s	145
4.3	Chronology of worker strikes, 1968	149
4.4	Chronology of student strikes, 1968	151
4.5	Major revolutionary organizations active in Afghanistan's politics	153
6.1	Results of presidential election, October 9, 2004	217
6.2	Results of parliamentary election, September 18, 2005	219

PREFACE

Since the formation of Afghanistan as a nation in the early eighteenth century, the state apparatus was touted as an institution that serves the interest of all people regardless of their social and class affiliations, however, it ignored the needs of tribal and ethnic communities in favor of serving the interests of the ruling class. The class character of the state and its dependence on alien powers for political, financial, and military support eroded the legitimacy of the state and its leadership. Since then, conflicts of interest among Pashtun rulers has led to the formation of political alliances with imperial powers for support against their rivals; this factor paved the way for British intervention in Afghanistan. The British supported and installed rulers who defended their interests and deferred to them—a situation that lasted until Afghanistan gained its independence in 1919. Nonetheless, British influence, both direct and indirect, continued in the country's political affairs, manifested in support of authoritarian and despotic leaders supportive of its policies. In the post-World War II period, the emerging superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—set out to carve their own spheres of influence in Afghanistan by providing economic and technical assistance as well as political support to individuals and groups within and outside the state bureaucracy that supported their politics and ideologies.

The Soviet Union succeeded in establishing its domination over Afghanistan after its cliental party, *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]), seized power in a military coup in April 1978 that facilitated the Soviet occupation of the country in December 1979 and spawned the anti-Soviet war of national liberation. The Soviets continued to support the Kabul client regime after their defeat and withdrawal of troops in 1989 and until the disintegration of the Soviet empire in 1991. A lack of Russian financial and military support led to the collapse of the PDPA's rule and establishment of a theocratic state in

1992. Islamic fundamentalists fought each other for domination of the country's political institutions—a war that claimed the lives of thousands of innocent men, women, and children, destroyed civil and political institutions and economic infrastructures, displaced thousands of people inside the country, and forced many others to seek refuge in the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan and elsewhere. This situation continued until U.S. and NATO forces toppled the Taliban in late 2001 and backed the establishment of a cliental political system of governance.

This study is a modest attempt to examine how dependent development and struggles for power within the state apparatus led to the formation of alliances with imperial powers and how the latter used these alliances to manipulate political development in Afghanistan to their own advantage. It also demonstrates how the failure of imperial powers to build a hegemonic project around a class faction within the state apparatus paved the way to their direct intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs—British engagement in Afghanistan prior to the country's independence in 1919, Russian occupation in the 1980s, and U.S. and NATO military intervention in late 2001.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As an advocate of social justice and a member of the political movement for progressive social transformation in the 1970s and after, I became interested in the dynamics of political development in Afghanistan, with a view to affect positive change in the trend of development and produce relevant literature to serve as a guide to novice students of political science and the progressive movement in their struggle for justice. This study is a product of many years of intensive reading, research, and observation of developments in Afghanistan in the era of globalization of the capitalist system. Without the assistance and support of friends it would not have been possible to complete this book. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mohamed Alibhai for his thoughtful comments on the final version of this book. I would also like to render thanks to Farooq Babrakzai for his cogent suggestions and comments on various aspects of development in his home country. I am equally grateful to Abbas Noyan, representative at the *Shura-e-Milli* (National Assembly) for sharing information on political developments during the legislative process. Most especially I thank my sisters Nigar and Sanam and my late brother Habibullah, School Superintendent in the Shibar district, Bamiyan Province, and their families who provided me with round-the-clock support during my stay in Afghanistan, which helped me focus on my research and writing. This study was also enhanced by the special part played by Khodayar Faiyaz, a distinguished figure in the liberation movement in Shibar, Bamiyan Province, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Appreciation is expressed for the role played by Shah Mohammad Rais and Iraj Mohammad Rais of Shah Mohammad Book Company for providing me access to their collections and research materials during my stay in Kabul. It is impossible to express sufficiently my thanks to Lorilei, who consistently provided moral and material support during my research, locating and accessing materials in library archives and preparing an

index for the book—she did everything she could and always more than I asked. Last, but not least, I am particularly grateful to Palgrave Publishers for bringing this study of Afghanistan's politics and society to a wider audience.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1747 Ahmad Shah Abdali of the Sadozai Pash-tun tribe is enthroned as king and rules Afghanistan for twenty-six years.
- 1773 Death of Ahmad Shah Abdali and succe-sion of his son Timur to the throne. Timur transfers the capital from Qandahar to Kabul and rules twenty years.
- 1798 Britain's containment policy toward Afghanistan deters Afghanistan from invading India.
- 1809 British envoy Mountstuart Elphinstone and King Shuja conclude a defensive pact that heralds the beginning of direct con-tact between Afghanistan and Britain.
- 1818 Armed confrontation among the Pashtun ruling elites leads to the outbreak of civil unrest that lasts until 1835.
- 1826 Dost Mohammad, of the Mohammadzai Pashtun tribe and ruler of Ghazni, seizes Kabul.
- 1839 First Anglo-Afghan War. The British install ex-king Shuja to power.
- 1841, December 23 British envoy Sir William Hay Macnaghten is assassinated in Kabul.
- 1842 End of the First Anglo-Afghan War.
- 1843, December Dost Mohammad seizes power and rules the country for twenty years.

- 1857 An Anglo-Afghan treaty is concluded in Peshawar and the British agree to provide subsidy to Dost Mohammad.
- 1863, June 9 Dost Mohammad dies and Shir Ali seizes power.
- 1866 Mohammad Afzal seizes power; Shir Ali flees to Qandahar.
- 1867 Mohammad Afzal dies and is succeeded by his brother Mohammad Azam.
- 1869 Shir Ali regains power.
- 1878 Second Anglo-Afghan War.
- 1879 King Shir Ali dies and is succeeded by his son Mohammad Yaqoob. Yaqoob abdicates the throne when the British invade Kabul.
- 1880 The British recognize Abd al-Rahman after he ascends to the throne.
- 1893 Britain and Afghanistan sign the Durand Line Treaty, demarcating the southern boundaries between Afghanistan and British-controlled India.
- 1901 Death of Abd al-Rahman and succession of his son Habibullah to the throne.
- 1905 Signing of an agreement between Afghanistan and Britain recognizing the validity of the 1880 and 1893 agreements between the two countries.
- 1914 Declaration of neutrality by Afghanistan during World War I.
- 1919, February 20 Assassination of King Habibullah.
- 1919, February 25 Amanullah proclaims himself king.
- 1919, April 13 Amanullah declares Afghanistan's independence.
- 1919, May 4 Third Anglo-Afghan War starts.
- 1919, May 28 Britain and Afghanistan declare a ceasefire.

- 1919, August 8 The British sign the Rawalpindi Peace Treaty with Afghanistan, recognizing Afghanistan's independence.
- 1923, April 9 Introduction of the constitution of Afghanistan.
- 1924, March Amanullah suppresses the Khost rebellion.
- 1927, April *Anis*, a fortnightly private paper begins publication and later becomes a daily paper.
- 1927, December 10 Amanullah embarks on a long journey to India, Egypt, and Europe.
- 1928, June 20 Amanullah returns home and initiates Western-style reforms.
- 1928, November The Shinwari Pashtun tribes rebel against Amanullah's reforms.
- 1928, December Habibullah, also known as *Bacha-e-Sagaw* (Water-Carrier Son) rebels against Amanullah.
- 1929, January 14 Amanullah abdicates the throne to Enayatullah and leaves Kabul for Qandahar and later Rome, Italy.
- 1929, January 18 Habibullah seizes Kabul and proclaims himself king.
- 1929, October 14 General Mohammad Nadir fights Habibullah, defeats him, and three days later declares himself king.
- 1929, November 3 Nadir arrests and executes Habibullah.
- 1930 Nadir recognizes the validity of the 1921 and 1923 agreements signed with Britain.
- 1931, October 31 Constitution of Afghanistan approved.
- 1933, November 8 King Nadir is assassinated and is succeeded by his son Mohammad Zahir.
- 1934, February 16 Parliamentary election in Afghanistan.
- 1934, August 21 The United States extends formal recognition to Afghanistan.
- 1934, September 25 Afghanistan joins the League of Nations.

- 1936 Pashtu is declared Afghanistan's national language.
- 1939, September 3 Beginning of World War II. Afghanistan mobilizes its armed forces as a preparatory measure.
- 1940, August 17 Afghanistan declares neutrality during World War II.
- 1941 Afghanistan ends the work of German and Italian nationals and expels them from Afghanistan because of demands by the Soviet Union and Britain.
- 1943, May 16 Establishment of Afghanistan's consulate in New York.
- 1946 Kabul University, founded in 1933, becomes operational.
- 1946, May 9 Prime Minister Mohammad Hashim resigns.
- 1946, November 9 Afghanistan is admitted to the United Nations (UN).
- 1948 Afghanistan initiates broadcasting news to support the Pashtun struggle for autonomy in Pakistan.
- 1949, April 20 The United States appoints Louis G. Dreyfus as ambassador to Afghanistan.
- 1949, June 30 Opening of the seventh parliamentary session in Kabul.
- 1950, January 13 Afghanistan extends official recognition to the Peoples' Republic of China.
- 1951, March 19 The United States appoints George R. Merrell as its ambassador to Afghanistan.
- 1953, September 6 Resignation of Prime Minister Shah Mahmood and the appointment of Mohammad Daoud as prime minister.
- 1955, January 19 The Peoples' Republic of China and Afghanistan establish diplomatic ties at the embassy level.

- 1955, March 29 Afghanistan and Pakistan relations deteriorate due to Afghanistan's support for the Pashtuns and Baluchis residing in Pakistan for their right to self-determination.
- 1955, March 30 A progovernment crowd marches on the Pakistan embassy in Kabul in support of the Pashtuns and Baluchis struggle for self-determination. The next day an angry crowd marches on the Pakistan consulate in Qandahar.
- 1955, April 1 A progovernment crowd attacks the Pakistan consulate in Jalalabad. Pakistanis attack the Afghanistan consulate in Peshawar.
- 1955, May 13 Saudi Arabia mediates between Afghanistan and Pakistan to resolve differences between them.
- 1955, December 18 Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev visits Kabul and promises economic aid for Afghanistan.
- 1958, January 8 The Soviet Union initiates the survey of oil deposits in the northern provinces of Afghanistan.
- 1958, June 30 Prime Minister Daoud visits the United States.
- 1959, August 24 Women of the ruling elite discard their veils during the anniversary of Afghanistan's Independence Day in Kabul.
- 1960, April 26 Death of former king Amanullah in Switzerland.
- 1961, September 3 Deteriorating relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan lead to border closures between the two countries.
- 1961, September 6 Afghanistan ends diplomatic ties with Pakistan.
- 1963, March 10 Prime Minister Daoud resigns and King Zahir appoints Mohammad Yousuf as prime minister four days later.

- 1963, May 29 Afghanistan-Pakistan joint communiqué confirms improvement of relations.
- 1963, July 20 Afghanistan opens its consulates in Peshawar and Quetta.
- 1963, August 12 Afghanistan and Pakistan exchange ambassadors.
- 1963,
October 12–17 Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev visits Afghanistan.
- 1964, October 1 The *Loya Jirgah* approves the constitution and the king endorses it.
- 1965, January 1 The pro-Soviet *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]) is founded.
- 1965, October 25 A major student demonstration breaks out in Kabul and the day becomes known as *Sayum-e-Agrab* because the incident occurred on the third day of the month of *Agrab*.
- 1965, October 29 Prime Minister Yousuf resigns.
- 1965, November 4 Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal is appointed prime minister.
- 1967, October 11 Maiwandwal resigns.
- 1967, November 1 The king appoints Noor Ahmad Etemadi as prime minister.
- 1969, June 22 Continuing student protests cause the government to close schools.
- 1971, May 17 Etemadi resigns.
- 1971, June 8 King Zahir appoints Dr. Abdul Zahir as prime minister.
- 1971, August 22 A severe drought claims the lives of thousands of people throughout Afghanistan.
- 1972, December 5 Dr. Abdul Zahir resigns and a few days later King Zahir appoints Mohammad Musa Shafiq as prime minister.
- 1973, July 8 King Zahir goes to Rome, Italy.

- 1973, July 17 Former prime minister Mohammad Daoud organizes a coup, seizes power, and declares Afghanistan a republic.
- 1975, July 28 Islamic fundamentalists attack government installations in Panjshir.
- 1977, January 30 Daoud convenes a *Milli Jirgah* to approve the constitution.
- 1977, February 14 The *Milli Jirgah* approves the constitution.
- 1977, February 24 Daoud endorses the constitution.
- 1977, November 16 Minister of Planning Ali Ahmad Khoram is assassinated in Kabul.
- 1978, April 17 Mir Akbar Khayber, a founding member of the PDPA, is assassinated in Kabul.
- 1978, April 19 The PDPA participates in the funeral procession denouncing Khayber's murder.
- 1978, April 26 Daoud arrests senior PDPA leaders.
- 1978, April 27 The PDPA launches a coup, seizes power, and declares Afghanistan a democratic republic.
- 1978, April 30 The Revolutionary Council elects the head of the PDPA, Noor Mohammad Taraki, as president and prime minister.
- 1978, August 18 State security arrests Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir on charges of a coup attempt.
- 1979, January 28 An armed struggle to overthrow the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul begins in regions close to the Pakistan border.
- 1979, February 14 Armed men kidnap the U.S. ambassador, Adolph Dubs, in Kabul. He is killed when state security forces try to rescue him.
- 1979, March 16 The army crushes an uprising in Herat, killing thousands of people.
- 1979, March 21 A rebellion against the regime begins in Nooristan and Kunar.
- 1979, March 27 Hafizullah Amin, minister for foreign affairs, is appointed prime minister.

- 1979, June 23 The Shia Hazaras in the Chindawul ghetto of Kabul rebel against the pro-Soviet regime.
- 1979, August 5 Army officers at the *Bala Hisar* Fort loyal to *Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan Liberation Organization [ALO]) and *Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Party of Afghanistan) rebel against the pro-Soviet regime.
- 1979, September 16 Amin removes Taraki from the party and state leadership and murders him.
- 1979, October 10 Radio Afghanistan announces that Taraki died from an illness. Amin releases a list containing the names of twelve thousand prison inmates and condemns Taraki for murdering them.
- 1979, December 27 Soviet paramilitary troops stationed in Kabul storm the palace, kill Amin, and install Babrak Karmal as head of state.
- 1980, February 25 Anti-Soviet protests continue and stores and shops remain closed.
- 1980, February 26 Security forces arrest hundreds of people during a search and mopping-up operation.
- 1980, April 21 A major anti-Soviet student demonstration occurs in Kabul and continues for several days.
- 1980, April 27 Government forces fire on student demonstrators, killing three female students.
- 1980, May 24 Anti-Soviet protesters march in streets of Kabul.
- 1980, June 8 The Soviet-backed government executes Abdul Majid Kalakani, head of *Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* (SAMA; People's Liberation Organization of Afghanistan).
- 1981, August 12 The Soviet-backed regime rescinds the decree that restricted landownership.

- 1982, March 10 U.S. President Ronald Reagan declares solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, marking March 21 as Afghanistan Day.
- 1985, October 23 The Soviet-backed regime issues an injunction that men up to age forty must serve in the army for a three-year term.
- 1986, May 4 Karmal is forced to resign from his post as secretary-general of the PDPA and is replaced by Najibullah, former director of the intelligence agency known by its acronym KHAD (*Khedamat-e-Aittilaat-e-Dawlat* [State Information Agency]). Karmal is removed from his post as president in November and is sent into exile in Moscow. Najibullah becomes head of state and secretary-general of the PDPA.
- 1987, February 4 Assassination of Meena, founder of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), by a member of *Hizb-e-Islami* of Gulbuddin Hikmatyar in Quetta, Pakistan.
- 1987, November 29 The Soviet-backed regime convenes a *Loya Jirgah* to endorse the constitution.
- 1987, November 30 The *Loya Jirgah* confirms Najibullah as president.
- 1988, February 23 Islamic fundamentalists declare the formation of the Afghanistan Interim Government (AIG).
- 1988, April 14 Afghanistan and Pakistan sign the Geneva Accords regarding the Soviet decision to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. The Soviet Union and the United States sign the document as guarantors.
- 1988, May 15 The Soviet Union begins troop withdrawals from Afghanistan.
- 1989, February 15 The last contingent of the Soviet army leaves Afghanistan.

- 1989, June 16 Nine Shia political organizations form *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan).
- 1990, June 27 The PDPA is renamed *Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party).
- 1992, April 16 Najibullah is prevented from leaving the country for India and seeks refuge at the UN compound in Kabul.
- 1992, April 27 The Soviet-backed government collapses and the next day Sebghatullah Mojad-dadi, head of *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan* (National Salvation Front of Afghanistan) becomes president, declaring Afghanistan an Islamic state.
- 1992, June 28 Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of *Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Society of Afghanistan) becomes head of state.
- 1993, February 11 Abd al-Rab Rasoul Sayyaf and Ahmad Shah Masoud launch a military offensive on the Hazara settlement in Afshar, Kabul, killing hundreds of innocent people, destroying their homes, molesting their women and girls, looting their property, and taking young boys and girls as captives.
- 1993, March 11 Leaders of the Islamic fundamentalists meet in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, signing a peace accord that is countersigned by the head of the host country, King Fahd.
- 1994, November 5 Taliban militias seize Qandahar and establish their headquarters there.
- 1995, February 10 Taliban seize control of Maidan Shahr, Wardak Province.
- 1995, March 6 Masoud attacks *Hizb-e-Wahdat* bases in Kabul and *Hizb-e-Wahdat* allies Abdul Rashid Dostam and Hikmatyar are defeated by the Taliban, causing *Hizb-e-Wahdat* to surrender its bases to the Taliban.

- 1995, March 13 Taliban militias capture Abdul Ali Mazari, head of *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, and murder him.
- 1995, September 5 The Taliban defeat Mohammad Ismail and capture Herat.
- 1995, September 7 The Taliban capture Ghor.
- 1996, April 3 About one thousand clerics declare allegiance to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, calling him *Amir al-Mominin* (Commander of the Believers).
- 1996, September 27 The Taliban seize Kabul, enter the UN compound, pull out Najibullah, and execute him.
- 1996, November 5 Former minister of defense Shah Nawaz Tanai declares his support for the Taliban.
- 1996, December 3 Karmal dies at age sixty-seven in Moscow and is buried in Hayratan in northern Afghanistan.
- 1997, May 25 Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia establish diplomatic ties with the Taliban.
- 1998, August 8 The Taliban massacre an estimated two thousand to five thousand Shia Hazaras after capturing Mazar, Balkh Province. They also murder eleven Iranian diplomats there.
- 1998, August 20 The United States launches cruise missiles at Afghanistan to flush out terrorist training centers operated by Osama bin Laden.
- 1998, September 13 The Taliban captures Bamiyan Province.
- 2001, February 26 The Taliban destroy the Buddha statues in Bamiyan Province.
- 2001, September 11 Supporters of *Al-Qaeda* attack the World Trade Center buildings in New York and the Pentagon.
- 2001, October 7 The United States initiates military assaults on the Taliban.

- 2001, November 9 The Northern Alliance (NA) seizes Mazar as U.S. B-2 bombers force the Taliban to surrender.
- 2001, November 13 The NA enters Kabul and seizes power after the Taliban abandon the city.
- 2001,
November 27–
December 6 The United States organizes the Bonn Conference in Germany, inviting representatives of Islamic fundamentalist and other political groups to discuss power sharing in the post-Taliban period.
- 2001, December 6 The Taliban surrender Qandahar to Hamid Karzai and their ringleader Mullah Omar and others flee.
- 2001, December 9 The Taliban rule ends and Karzai enters Qandahar.
- 2001, December 15 The United States opens its embassy in Kabul.
- 2001, December 18 U.S. bombing of the Taliban ends.
- 2001, December 22 The United States installs Karzai as head of the interim administration.
- 2002, February 14 Abdul Rahman, minister of aviation and tourism, is assassinated in Kabul.
- 2002, June 11–19 A *Loya Jirgah* composed of 1,650 representatives endorses Karzai as the head of the Transitional Authority.
- 2002, July 6 Former warlord and vice president Haji Abdul Qadir is assassinated in Kabul.
- 2003, May 1 Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. secretary of defense, visits Kabul and assures the government of continued U.S. support in the war against terrorism.
- 2003, November 3 The government unveils the constitution.
- 2003, December 13 The constitutional *Loya Jirgah* comprising 502 representatives, including 50 appointed delegates, is inaugurated in Kabul.

- 2004, January 4 The constitutional *Loya Jirgah* approves the constitution.
- 2005, December 19 The National Assembly comprising two chambers—the House of Representatives (249 members) and the House of Elders, or Senate (102 members)—is inaugurated.
- 2006, January 31 Delegates from seventy countries gather in London for a two-day conference, the “Afghanistan Compact,” to chart out a five-year plan regarding national development strategy and security in Afghanistan.
- 2006, March 1 U.S. President George Bush visits Kabul and inaugurates the U.S. embassy there.
- 2007, February 20 The senate endorses general amnesty for warlords and warring factions that committed crimes against humanity during the two decades of civil war.
- 2007, March 12 The first meeting of the Regional Peace Jirgah between Afghanistan and Pakistan is held in Islamabad.
- 2007, April 3 Afghanistan becomes the eighth member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SARC), founded in 1985.
- 2007, June 4 Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz addresses the Enabling Environment Conference: Effective Private Sector Contribution to Development in Afghanistan held in Kabul on June 4–5.
- 2007, July 23 Ex-king Mohammad Zahir (October 15, 1914–July 23, 2007), who ruled the country for forty years (1933–73) dies in Kabul.
- 2007, August 9–12 Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Peace Jirgah is held in Kabul.
- 2007, August 14 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran, visits Kabul and discusses bilateral relations between the two countries.

- 2008, March 30 Thousands of Hazaras in Kabul stage a protest rally demanding the government and the UN stop intrusion of the *Kochis* into Hazarajat.
- 2008, April 27 The Jalaluddin Haqqani network allied with the Taliban opens fire at a military parade in Kabul in observance of the anniversary of seizure of power by Islamic fundamentalist; Karzai escapes unhurt.
- 2008, October 27 A two-day mini-Jirgah is held between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 2008,
November 16–17 Kabul University students organize a demonstration demanding that the university's name include the Persian word *Danishgah* in addition to the Pashtu word *Pohantoon* and its English-equivalent word, Kabul University.
- 2008, December 15 Karzai presents a medal of honor to President Bush after his visit to Iraq on December 14. A local journalist, Muntather Zaidi, expresses his disgust with Bush by flinging his shoes at him.
- 2009, February 7 The National Assembly approves a new law for Shia Muslims in Afghanistan (Shia Personal Status Laws, sponsored by Shia cleric Mohammad Asif Mohsini) and later Karzai endorses it.
- 2009, March 31 The International Conference on Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Strategy in a Regional Context is held in The Netherlands.
- 2009, August 20 Presidential and provincial council elections held in Afghanistan.
- 2009, November 2 Independent Election Commission declares that there will not be a runoff election on November 7 and proclaims Karzai the victor after his rival Abdullah Abdullah withdraws from the race.

- 2010, January 25 Karzai meets with Asif Ali Zardari, president of Pakistan, for a one-day summit held in Istanbul by Turkish president Abdullah Gul to discuss cooperation in such areas as economy and security, intelligence, and the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking.
- 2010, January 28 A one-day international conference hosted by Britain, the UN and the government of Afghanistan is held in London. Foreign ministers and delegates from seventy countries attend to chart a plan for the future of Afghanistan and to integrate the Taliban into the government.
- 2010, March 28 U.S. President Barack Obama makes a surprise visit to Kabul and meets with U.S. troops and Karzai. The presidents discuss corruption in the Afghanistan government, the fight against narcotics traffickers, and the use of a merit-based system for appointing senior government officials.

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a country with diverse geography, people, civilizations, and political history that gained international attention with the Soviet invasion of the country in December 1979. It then faded from the spotlight after the Soviet troop withdrawal. It recaptured international attention after supporters of the Islamic fundamentalist organization, *Al-Qaeda*, who were sheltered and supported by the Taliban, attacked the World Trade Center buildings in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, using commercial airliners as weapons of mass destruction. Afghanistan became a pariah state and writers, scholars, and the Western media depicted Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists associated with Islamic fundamentalists. These one-dimensional views and analyses provided a distorted picture of the country, its people, and its history. Islamic fundamentalists are not representative of the country and its people.

Afghanistan is one of the underdeveloped countries of central and west Asia in the region known as the Middle East. The country is bordered by the Sinkiang Province of China to the east; Iran to the west; Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to the north; and Pakistan to the south and southeast. Its geography and porous borders have facilitated the smuggling of narcotics, goods, and arms that have made it impossible for this corrupt and fractious state and the international community to maintain effective control of the border regions. The country's landscape has steep mountain ranges and deep and narrow valleys that separate and sometimes isolate regions inhabited by people of various cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. Geography has largely contributed to the perpetuation of tribalism, regionalism, and ethnocentrism. The lack of a modern transportation system, combined with rugged terrain and widespread illiteracy, has inhibited interaction among the diverse ethnolinguistic communities, causing people to rely on their own meager resources for survival and instilling suspicion of its neighbors. Individuals have rarely ventured

beyond their community borders, particularly during the civil war, as militia leaders associated with several Islamic parties have controlled villages and imposed severe restrictions on people traveling in and out of the region.

Afghanistan is a patriarchal society where kinship plays a prominent role in mobilizing public support and developing alliances. Polygamy is a common practice among affluent rural and urban families, as it helps wealthy men to expand their social networks and power by creating alliances. Sons are the sole inheritors of movable and nonmovable property after the death of the father. Marriage is common between close relatives, such as cousins, as it tends to maintain family solidarity and ensures that the bride's wealth remains in the lineage domain. Another form of marriage is the exchange of sisters between two men, and this too has served to consolidate relations between two families. Women are regarded as private property and men are duty bound to defend and protect their women from strangers, even as they feel entitled to abuse and mistreat their women. Women who are perceived to have behaved improperly are severely punished, and those who are thought to have engaged in extramarital affairs are stoned to death. The rise of Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy since the 1980s has forced women to cover their bodies from head to toe in bulky garments; Islamists maintain that seclusion of women is based on Islamic ethos, while modernists, liberals, and progressives disagree with such a rationalization.

The country's economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with irrigated wheat constituting the staple diet. The primary occupation of the people is farming and animal husbandry. Farmers in most parts of the country use primitive agricultural instruments to till the land. Feudal landowners and tribal chiefs usually have the largest land shares, and poor peasants and farmers work on a small plot of their own land and may also work as tenant farmers for feudal or absentee landowners. Years of armed conflict have damaged or destroyed many irrigation systems throughout the country. The lack of adequate land to sustain families and civil strife have caused many families to migrate to urban centers in search of employment. Many of Afghanistan's small-scale industries sustained damage during the recent civil war, and the few refurbished ones, with their small number of semiskilled blue collar workers, are not able to meet local demand, so the country remains dependent on the outside world and particularly on its neighbor countries. Commerce and trade suffered a serious setback during the civil war and are in the process of a very slow recovery. Many local private and international banks have been established to help improve

the local economy, however, armed insurgency poses a major threat to the expansion of trade within and outside the country.

Tribal chiefs and feudal lords known by the titles *Mir*, *Khan*, *Malik*, and so on are at the top range of the social ladder and wield considerable social and economic influence. Religious leaders known by the titles *Pir*, *Shah*, and so on come mainly from upper-class families and play a critical role in people's social lives, defending private ownership of property and its corresponding culture, politics and traditions, and persuading illiterate and unworldly people to submit to their leadership. The ruling elites in the state bureaucracy are mainly affiliated with *Jihadis*, Islamic warriors; although they lacked distinction in the past, they have become wealthy as they have used their position to enrich themselves and continue to defend the status quo. Radical intellectuals of the middle and lower classes—the dispossessed—continue to agitate with radical discourse for establishment of a just system of governance that promotes public welfare, gender equality, and equality of ethnoreligious communities in the political arena.

Afghanistan is rich in natural resources, and in the post-World War II period, imperialist powers, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, have tried to consolidate their spheres of influence in the country. As a first step in that direction they provided loans, credit, and economic aid to develop the country's natural resources, however, these resources are still poorly developed and citizens of the country continue to live in poverty, subsisting on the equivalent of one or two U.S. dollars a day.

Like its geography, the people of Afghanistan are diverse in their ethnicity. Major ethnolinguistic communities include Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluchis, Tatar, Aimaq, Qizilbash, Arab, and others, as well as Hindus and Sikhs who migrated to Afghanistan from the Indian subcontinent; each ethnolinguistic community has its own unique culture and traditions. There are an estimated forty languages spoken throughout the country, with Dari or Persian as the dominant language, being widely spoken and understood by all ethnic communities throughout the country. Afghanistan's constitution recognizes all spoken languages, but Persian and Pashtu are the officially recognized languages of the state. International boundaries arbitrarily drawn by imperial powers separate ethnolinguistic communities. The Pashtuns and Baluchis are divided between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Pamiris, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen are divided by the Oxus River among Afghanistan and its post-Soviet central Asian states. Armed conflict has led to the outward migration of families, and the exiles are exposed to and influenced by the cultures

and traditions of their host countries and continue to practice these newfound habits when they return home.

The vast majority of the country's population are Muslim, while there are a small number of non-Muslims such as Hindus and Sikhs. Religion has played a pivotal role in shaping the country's history and civilization from the emergence of Zoroastrianism to Buddhism and Islam. In 652 A.D., Muslim Arab invading armies launched a war of conquest on Afghanistan, however, resistance to the Arab armies continued in many parts of the country. By the ninth and eleventh centuries, the Arabs had defeated local armed resistance and forced the people to embrace Islam. The only region that did not convert to Islam until the turn of the twentieth century was Nooristan, situated in the eastern part of the country; the region was formerly known as *Kafiristan*, or the land of infidels. Domination by Arab rule paved the way for Arab cultural influences that resulted in the virtual elimination of ancient cultural practices and religious traditions.

Islam is not a monolithic but a pluralistic faith where various Islamic practices exist. Islam divided into the Sunni, Shia, and Kharijite factions after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 A.D. The Sunnis maintain that Muhammad did not leave precise instructions as to who should succeed him, and to them consensus by tribal chiefs was the best method of choosing a successor to guide the Muslims. They adhere to the *sunna*, or the practice of the prophet, and thus they are known as Sunnis. The Shias believe that Muhammad designated his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, son of Abu Talib, as his successor, and they became known as the Shias, or partisans of Ali. The Kharijites, who constitute a minority group, argue that any qualified and pious Muslim, including an Ethiopian slave, can lead the Muslims.

The Sunnis adhere to a strict interpretation of Islamic doctrine. They later divided and adhere to four major schools of Islamic law that are named after their founders: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali. Sunnis of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence are the dominant group in Afghanistan. In the Sunni tradition, clerics known by such titles as *Mawlawi*, *Mullah*, and so on are prominent figures who regard themselves as the custodians of Islamic faith and the only qualified persons to interpret the faith and religious scriptures and guide the community of followers. The Shias developed the doctrine of *Imam*, the divine leader who is infallible and endowed with the divine ability to lead the Muslims. The last Shia *Imam*, Musa al-Kazim, disappeared around 873 A.D. and his followers believe that one day he will return to lead them and they anxiously await his reappearance. The Ismailis, who split from the Shias, believe that the line of the *Imamat* has

continued unbroken to the present day; Karim Aga Khan is the forty-ninth and present *Imam* of the community.

Another prominent Islamic group is the *Sufi*, Islamic mystics whose philosophical and theological orientation do not attach any value to material things. To the *Sufis*, mortification and purification of one's soul is the only road to salvation and they attach great importance to the philosophy of personal experience as the way to seek union with *Allah* (God). The *Sufis* are divided into several *tariqahs*: Naqshbandiyya, Cheshtiyya, and Qadiriyya, among others. In Afghanistan, Sayed Ahmad Gilani is a prominent leader of the Qadiriyya, and Sebghatullah Mojaddadi is head of the Naqshbandiyya communities. They played a prominent role in Afghanistan's politics in the 1980s and 1990s, and continue to do so.

The Sunni Pashtuns ruled in Afghanistan in 1747, when the Abdali tribes headed by Ahmad Shah Abdali seized power and laid the foundation for Pashtun domination of the country's politics. The struggle for power among Pashtun rulers caused them to form alliances with imperial powers to defend their rule by receiving financial, political, and military support to subdue their adversaries and ethnic communities fighting for their rights and political and economic equality. These leaders followed a policy of divide and conquer, and exploited religious, tribal, and ethnolinguistic differences to pit one ethnoreligious group against another in order to maintain their rule. And it is this imperial legacy that continues to hinder national unity in Afghanistan. Although the dispossessed Muslims of all ethnoreligious communities coexisted relatively peacefully, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism backed by the West in their crusade against Socialist political views since the 1960s and the Soviet occupation in the 1980s adversely affected the development and growth of pluralistic traditions, bringing them under the rule of Islamic orthodoxy. Ethnoreligious communities helped each other whenever regional and imperial powers invaded their common land, expressing their fury against tyrannical and corrupt rulers as well as imperialist powers.

Khashm, a Persian term for rage, signifies the anger of a people who are forced by despotic rulers to do things against their nature even as they aspire to achieve democracy and societal justice. This includes defying colonial and imperial powers whenever they interfere in the internal affairs of their homeland by either adopting a noncooperative attitude or engaging in armed struggle against despotic rulers and their imperial supporters to end their suffering and free their country. The British intervened in Afghanistan's internal

affairs at the end of the eighteenth century, causing the people of the country to fight three major wars until the British were defeated and recognized Afghanistan's independence in 1919. Women did not take an active part in the anti-British armed struggle, but many aided men on the battlefield as auxiliary forces. Their particularly chilling methods are depicted in a poem by Rudyard Kipling, which advised soldiers what to do before the women reached them:

Just roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.¹

When the Soviet Union's surrogate party *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]) seized power in a putsch in April 1978, it used the coercive state machinery to eliminate people who opposed its policies of building a Soviet-style system of governance. Rank-and-file members of the PDPA often stated that *khashm-e-khalq khashm-e-Khuda ast* ("people's rage is God's rage"). By invoking this statement, the ruling party attempted to give the regime some much needed religious sanctity.

The PDPA encountered mounting opposition and resistance to its rule that caused the Russians to intervene militarily in Afghanistan to sustain and defend the client regime. The Russians justified their continued occupation of the country and support of the client regime as defense of Afghanistan against aggression by U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists. The Russians also organized client forces such as *Hizb-e-Tudeh* and *Fidayian-e-Aksariyat* in Iran and other countries and sent a significant number of them to work in Afghanistan and support the regime. For example, members of *Tudeh* and *Fidayian* worked in the professions of health and mass media as technicians in Kabul, and Balkh and Herat provinces.² People throughout Afghanistan nonetheless vented their *khashm* on the Russians and its puppet regime and were determined to fight to the death to liberate Afghanistan.

Russian war veterans, who became known as *afgantsy*, were disillusioned with the Russian leaders and their policies on Afghanistan. Their feelings are genuinely reflected in poems about the war they waged in Afghanistan that claimed the lives of many Russians as well as Afghans:

What enemy escaped his fate,
What friends amongst these rocks we lost.³

After completion of their military service in Afghanistan, some Russian soldiers who returned home called for an end to the war. Poems circulated that made the leadership aware of their grievances and the plight of Russian soldiers dying on the battlefields and calling on the leadership to bring the troops home.

The Russian client party, the PDPA, also faced a similar situation, losing men and material in the war, they tried to blame nationalists, patriots, and revolutionaries opposing and fighting the Soviet occupation army for the continued suffering of the people. To discredit these forces, the PDPA referred to its political opponents as lackeys of Western imperialism and portrayed the PDPA as independent and nationalist. In fact, it was the PDPA that remained subservient lackeys not only to the Russians but also to Western imperial powers. After the collapse of their rule in 1992, rank-and-file members of the PDPA sought political asylum in western Europe and North America. During the peak of their power, the PDPA condemned these countries as imperialists; now its members praised them as champions of democracy and human rights for providing members of the defunct PDPA with housing and financial support. After U.S. and NATO forces overthrew the Taliban, a number of PDPA members reinvented themselves as liberals, republicans, and patriots and joined the U.S.-installed government as senior army and civilian officers and as lawmakers in the *Shura-e-Milli* (National Assembly).

Prior to his death, the puppet leader Babrak Karmal tried to exonerate himself for his reliance on Russian imperialism by stating that one of the greatest lessons he learned is that no nation can achieve progress and attain independence by relying on foreign forces.⁴ Although he made such a statement to project his image as a nationalist, people who suffered under his rule and the Russian occupation forces did not forgive him nor lament his death. On the contrary, they vented their *khashm* on him by desecrating his grave and that of his predecessor, Noor Mohammad Taraki. Puppet leaders rely on imperialism for military, economic, and political support. Patriotic and nationalist leaders rely on the peoples' support and reject imperialism, as demonstrated in ex-king Amanullah's rejection of the German offer to support him if seized power during World War II. Amanullah stated that he did not wish the people and the country to be imposed on by imperial powers because such an act would undermine his personal integrity and the sovereignty of his nation.⁵ This is the lesson that puppet leaders ignore.

Although people had no means to directly challenge the Islamic fundamentalists after they seized power in 1992, they expressed

their *khashm*, refusing to endorse their rule because Islamic warriors fought each other for domination of the country's politics—a war that destroyed the country's infrastructure, claimed the lives of thousands, and forced thousands more to leave the country. People looked to the international community to deliver them from the brutality of Islamic fundamentalists. In the fight against the Russians, the United States supported Islamic fundamentalists, referring to them as freedom fighters, and helped Osama bin Laden, head of *Al-Qaeda*, to mobilize Islamic fundamentalists from the Middle East and other countries to take part in the anti-Russian armed struggle in Afghanistan. When the same Islamic fundamentalists turned against the United States and launched attacks on its soil in September 2001, the United States flexed its muscles, overthrew the Taliban, and installed Hamid Karzai as head of state. The United States justified its occupation of Afghanistan on the pretext of continuing the war on terrorism, promoting democracy, and protecting human rights and women's rights. People became disenchanted with the leadership for including the same Islamic warriors and pro-Soviets who committed crimes against humanity in the government and its inability to eliminate rampant corruption, improve peoples' lives, and restore stability.

This book intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of political development in Afghanistan and the policies of imperial powers that influenced the direction of development in the country. A detailed study of the subject is not yet available to supplement existing knowledge on how conflicts of interest within the ruling class in the state apparatus led to imperial intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Existing literature views the state as an institution that defends the interests of its citizens regardless of their social, ethnic, religious, and class backgrounds. The literature fails to unravel the class character of the state and the efforts of the ruling class to use the proprietary state as a means of suppressing antisystemic forces, and for the most part it focuses on the role of the Islamic insurgency in the fight against Soviet occupation forces. Issues such as tribalism, ethnicity, and regionalism, which constitute the very fabric of the society, are largely dismissed. The existing literature also characterizes the United States as a staunch ally of Muslims in the fight against the menace of Soviet-style communism and hails leaders of the Islamic insurgency as freedom fighters and national heroes, disregarding their fanaticism and brutal policies and their multiple linkages and dependency on the United States.

An analysis and discussion of existing literature cannot be realized without a theoretical view or a number of such views. The main

theoretical view that guides the analysis throughout the book is the debate that dependent development in peripheral societies generates public disenchantment with despotic leaders and the growing involvement of imperial powers to support the cliental regime. As a member of the intellectual community and an active participant in the movement for progressive social transformation in Afghanistan, I was further encouraged to examine the validity of this debate by examining developments in Afghanistan as imperial powers—the British, Russians, and Americans—invaded the country. Although an effort has been made to reduce my own voice in the reconstruction of events, I cannot remain entirely indifferent toward events that have unfolded and shaped my homeland. As an insider and observer, I try to provide readers with an in-depth knowledge of the internal development and imperialist politics of intervention in Afghanistan's politics. A major objective of this book is to investigate how the bureaucratic ruling elites in the state apparatus, lacking public support, have relied on imperial powers for economic, military, and political support, and how imperial powers have exploited the situation to advance their own agendas, expanding their political, cultural, and economic domination of the country.

In the writing of this book, primary sources were used and complemented by the use of secondary sources. Primary sources include government documents, literature produced by local partisan and nonpartisan scholars, and the literature of political organizations active in the politics of transformation in Afghanistan. Secondary sources include the literature produced by scholars both in academic and public institutions outside Afghanistan. Sifting through the files of the KGB archives and recently declassified files of the U.S. National Security Agency has provided fresh insight into the developments in Afghanistan that previous literature could not. These documents unravel the conundrum of Soviet policies in Afghanistan as well as the U.S. policy of supporting religious-minded individuals and Islamic fundamentalist organizations, and how the United States established working relations with the Islamic fundamentalists prior to and after the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001.

The sparse existing literature on the topic remains repetitive and narrative of events that unfolded in Afghanistan since the country gained its independence from the British in 1919. This book is significantly different, in the sense that it tries to study and analyze the origins and development of secular and religious ideologies espoused by various social and political groups prior to and after the Soviet invasion. Contextualization of these ideas would help to reconstruct

the proper social, cultural, and political contexts of development in Afghanistan and the role of external factors that were instrumental in the shaping of events and their consequences. I believe this study makes a modest contribution toward a better understanding of development in Afghanistan in the context of the politics of intervention and occupation by imperial powers propping up puppet leaders to defend their interests.

Chapter 1 concentrates on the periodic armed conflicts for power among the rulers of Afghanistan since the eighteenth century that paved the way for British colonial intervention, focusing on the impact of British interference on political development after Afghanistan attained its independence. It also concentrates on state repressive policies and the struggle by nationalists and progressive forces for societal justice prior to the World War II. Chapter 2 looks at modernization and development in the post-World War II period and the battle between the United States and the Soviet Union as rising imperial powers to establish their influence in Afghanistan until the downfall of the monarchy in 1973. Chapter 3 examines how a shift in alliance from one imperial power to the other resulted in a coup in 1978 that transformed Afghanistan into a Russian satellite and how U.S. efforts to win Afghanistan to its side caused the Russians to occupy the country in December 1979. Chapter 4 looks at the struggles of opposition political parties espousing different ideologies and examines U.S. support for Islamic fundamentalists to fight the Russian occupation army. Chapter 5 examines the politics of the Islamic state established in the post-Soviet period, the resulting civil war, and the emergence and downfall of the Taliban regime. The final chapter analyzes the politics of nation building under U.S. and NATO occupation forces and resistance to U.S. domination, and synthesizes the discussion with regard to the future prospects for the country.

CHAPTER 1



REFORM AND REBELLION IN POSTINDEPENDENCE

PASHTUN ARISTOCRACY AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM

In the fourteenth century, the fragmented Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan were called *Afghans*, and the use of the term gradually expanded in the eighteenth century to include all Pashtun tribes in the country. The Pashtuns rose to political dominance at the beginning of the eighteenth century, taking advantage of favorable sociopolitical and economic conditions that weakened the invading armies that had bested them in the past. The disintegration of Persian rule in the west and Moghul rule in the east, and continuing struggles among feudal rulers in central Asia to the north provided opportunities for the Pashtun tribes to unite and lay the foundation for an independent state. The creation of such a state was in the best interests of Pashtun feudal landlords and clerics, who no longer wished to pay heavy taxes to the Persians and Moghuls. The vast majority of Pashtuns who had suffered under alien powers supported their own tribal chiefs to free them from tyrannical rulers. After the death of Nadir Quli Beg in 1747 (he became known as Nadir Shah Afshar after he was proclaimed king of Persia in 1736), the Persian dominion disintegrated into separate entities and its eastern domain came under the command of Ahmad Shah Abdali, a member of the Sadozai Pashtun tribe and a commander of Afshar's army who established his power base in Qandahar.

Ahmad Shah Abdali united the Pashtun tribes, and during a gathering in a mosque where the tribal chiefs pronounced him king, "in the midst of the festivities there arrived a convoy in Qandahar, bearing from the Punjab and Sind the tribute due to Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah at once seized the convoy, which was of extreme value, and wisely

consolidated his power by distributing the contents liberally among the soldiers, officers, and nobles of his newly founded kingdom.”¹ The Abdali tribe was renamed *Durani* (pearls) and Ahmad Shah Abdali chose the title of *Dur-e-Duran* (Pearl of Pearls) and members of his tribe occupied leading positions in the state apparatus, the army, and the court. The ruling Abdali elites enjoyed numerous privileges, were exempted from paying any type of tax; the Pashtuns regarded themselves as rulers but not as citizens. After consolidating his power base, Ahmad Shah Abdali embarked on a war of conquest in Baluchistan, Sind, and Punjab, and his marauding armies plundered the areas they seized. Writers and clerics on his payroll, and even some contemporary writers, regarded him as an Islamic hero. Although Abdali conquered the northern areas of the Hindu Kush mountain range, Balkh, Maimana, Qunduz, and Shibarghan, local tribal leaders enjoyed semi-autonomy and did not pay taxes to the treasury of Ahmad Shah Abdali’s kingdom. The reign of Abdali heralded the beginning of Pashtun domination of politics; he settled Pashtun tribes in the conquered lands in north and west, suppressing the resistance of non-Pashtun ethnic communities. After Ahmad Shah Abdali’s death in 1773, his son Timur succeeded him, and in 1776 Timur transferred the capital from Qandahar to Kabul. After Timur’s death in 1793, his twenty-three sons fought each other for power and allied with colonial powers for support; continuous conflicts among the Pashtun ruling elites was a factor that eventually led to British colonial intervention.

The reign of King Shuja (1803–10) coincided with a British and Russian rivalry in the region. The British were determined to contain the Russian advance toward the Indian Ocean. As early as 1809, the British formed an alliance with Shuja, defending him against his opponents. Despite British support, Shuja was overthrown by his brother Mahmood in 1819; Mahmood’s rule came to an end after he murdered his *Wazir* (minister), Fatih, causing Fatih’s brothers to avenge his death. Armed conflict for power continued unabated, and in 1826 Dost Mohammad of the Mohammadzai Pashtun tribe seized power. His growing strength ran up against the British expansionist policy toward central Asia. The British tried to force Dost Mohammad to discontinue his relations with Iran and Russia, as it regarded such a relationship as a security threat to British India. Dost Mohammad did not acquiesce to their demands, causing the British to take punitive actions against him. Dost Mohammad’s hostility toward the pro-British ruler of Punjab and his annexing of Peshawar further provoked the British. The British decided to install a puppet leader who would be aligned with and loyal to British interests. They signed an

agreement with ex-king Shuja, who agreed that Afghanistan's foreign policy would be subject to British control in exchange for British support to install him to power and allow the British to organize his army. When the British invaded the country in 1839 and installed Shuja to power, Dost Mohammad fought them; in a battle in Parwan in 1840 he defeated the British, but left his army, returned to Kabul, and surrendered himself to the British and exile in India.

With the British occupation of the country, families of British officials settled in Kabul along with thousands of Indian functionaries to provide services to sustain colonial rule in Afghanistan. Shuja depended on the British army of occupation for protection of his rule; he and his family were virtual political prisoners of the British army, as no one was allowed to see him without British permission. The only person who could visit him freely was his British security agent. British political representative Sir William Hay Macnaghten, as administrator general, had the sole authority to appoint senior government officials, governors, and other administrators and to dismiss them if he was not pleased with their services. The British elevated to senior government posts individuals who lacked integrity and public distinction but who were malleable and submissive to their rule. As part of the strategy of consolidation of its rule, the British resorted to coercive colonial measures that included imprisonment or house arrest, severe physical punishment, and exile for those who opposed their policies or their installed leader; patriotic nationalists and others who opposed colonial domination of the country were subjected to this kind of mistreatment or worse. When fifty prisoners from Ghazni were brought to the court, they yelled at Shuja, calling him a puppet leader. They were executed, as officers in charge chopped their heads off in a measure intended to intimidate others who defied the puppet king.² The British elevated British Indian Muslims to positions of authority in Afghanistan, and prior to entering Afghanistan, the British gave these people religious titles such as *Mawlawi*, *Mullah*, *Sayyed*, and *Shah* so that the people of Afghanistan would accept these British subjects as their own. The presence of British Indian Muslims increased in Afghanistan until the country gained its independence in 1919.

After consolidation of his rule, the puppet leader Shuja told his colonial advisors that there was no need for the British army to remain in Afghanistan; however, the British justified their continued occupation of the country by stating that they would remain in Afghanistan so long as exiled leader Dost Mohammad posed a threat to British rule. Likewise, Soviet imperial power justified the occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s on the grounds that its troops remained to

deter the threat of Western-backed Islamic insurgency. Similarly, in 2001, after entering the country, the United States stated that U.S. and NATO forces would remain in Afghanistan so long as terrorism remained a threat to the country and region.

The British policy of maintaining colonial domination was centered on their logic that the people of the colonies must remain poor, as poverty forces people to work hard to make ends meet, therefore they have no time to think about organizing against the political system or fighting their rulers. The British also reduced taxes on goods imported from British colonies to Afghanistan—a move that decimated the local economy. To maintain effective control the British also utilized a “divide and conquer” policy, pitting ethnolinguistic and religious communities against each other—tribal, religious, and ethnic hostilities and infighting are a British legacy that continue to the present day in Afghanistan. To capture those who opposed British rule, the British instructed their top Indian agents to enter into negotiation with well-known tribal and political figures, gaining their loyalty to support the British in exchange for financial rewards provided that they arrest and murder anti-British individuals.³ The British actively recruited dissolute or corrupt local religious leaders and other informants and utilized them to promote British interests. One such person was Mullah Ghulam, who received forty thousand rupees for his pro-British activities in Kabul and regions north of the city; he was forced to flee to India after the puppet king Shuja was killed.⁴

People despised the British-installed King Shuja, viewing him as illegitimate, and a puppet ruler serving his British colonial masters. Patriotic religious leaders excised Shuja’s name from the Friday prayers in mosques, and as anti-Shuja comments spread, people began to chant the comments as epithets, referring to him as an Armenian who serves the interests of the British East India Company. People also recited, with a slight modification, the two verses Shuja had inscribed when he minted coins. The original verses on the coin read:

Coined in silver and gold brighter than the Sun and Moon
The apple of the eyes, the pearl of pearls Shah Shuja.

The two verses were altered intentionally to dishonor Shuja and read as follows:

Coined on gold and silver Shah Shuja, the Armenian,
Who is the sweetheart of Lord Burns and the true servant of
Company.⁵

Colonial settlers were also widely hated and became targets of hostility. Local residents attacked the British mission and killed the mission head, Alexandar Burnes, and his staff; this act paved the way for the First Anglo-Afghan War. Shuja was on his way to Jalalabad to join the British camp there but was captured and killed on charges of treason. The British force moved into Kabul and installed Shuja's son to the throne, but he soon fled the capital as the insurgency mounted against the British. The British suffered heavy casualties and retreated to Jalalabad with only one British survivor, Dr. William Brydon. The British army destroyed the Char Chata bazaar, the covered market, and the rest of the city of Kabul in retaliation for the murder of their envoy, Macnaghten. The war ended in 1842 when the British left the country, however, they remained determined to rule Afghanistan, albeit indirectly. To this end, they allowed Dost Mohammad to return to Kabul to assume power, providing him with financial assistance and weapons to consolidate his leadership. After Dost Mohammad's death in 1863 Shir Ali, one of his twenty-seven sons, seized power. In 1866 Shir Ali's elder brother Mohammad Afzal, who was exiled in British India, defeated him and seized power; he died in 1867 and was succeeded by his brother Mohammad Azam. In 1869 Shir Ali organized his forces, defeated Azam, and regained power. After consolidating his position, Shir Ali initiated a small-scale modernization of the state and the economy, building a new city, *Shirabad*, later renamed *Shirpoor*, in Kabul, repairing existing roads, building schools, and publishing a newspaper, *Shams al-Nahar* (Morning Sun).

The Second Anglo-Afghan War began when Shir Ali tried to improve ties with the Russians, which provoked the British to invade the country in 1878. Shir Ali left Kabul for the northern areas, trying to solicit Russian support. He appointed his son Mohammad Yaqub as governor of Kabul. When Shir Ali died in Balkh in early 1879, Yaqub seized power, secured the support of the British, and declared himself king. He subordinated himself to the British and signed the Gandumak Treaty with the British in May 1879, transforming Afghanistan into a British protectorate. The British forces stationed in the *Bala Hisar* Fort in Kabul imposed martial law, prohibiting people from carrying arms or approaching the British mission under pain of death. The British even executed a number of people who were not aware of the British declaration of martial law and were still carrying arms. When Yaqub abdicated the throne, the British took over the state and exiled him to India—an action that caused a rebellion against the British. People attacked the British mission in Kabul and killed the head of the mission and his staff; these actions incited anti-British

armed struggles elsewhere in the country. The British suffered major casualties, an estimated 40,000 men and 99,000 camels, which were used for delivering men and supplies. The British lent support to Abd al-Rahman, son of Mohammad Afzal, who seized power in 1880. The war ended in early 1881 when the British left the country. Abd al-Rahman submitted to British rule that provided him with military equipment, enabling him to consolidate his power base throughout the country. *Bala Hisar*, a fortified compound on a hilltop in Kabul, was the seat of the government as well as the traditional residence of kings; Abd al-Rahman built a new palace, *Arg*, in 1888 in the center of Kabul. In 1893 Abd al-Rahman concluded the Durand Agreement with the British, demarcating the boundary line between Afghanistan and British India and separating the Pashtuns and Baluchis between Afghanistan and present-day Pakistan.

To maintain control of the country, Abd al-Rahman adopted a draconian domestic policy to the extent that people referred to him as the "iron Amir." A British citizen in Kabul wrote, "The Amir sent for me to the palace, and was a-eating ice-creams in an upper verandah. For hundred mutinous soldiers from Herat were marched in. The Amir scowled. 'Poke their eyes out,' he ordered, and they did it then and there. I couldn't finish my ice-cream, but the Amir gulped his."⁶

Abd al-Rahman brutally suppressed any challenges to his rule, sought out and eliminated potential opponents, and forced many into exile. He launched wars of conquest on Hazarajat, inhabited by the Shia Hazaras, in 1893 and subjugated the region to his rule. The Hazara rebellion against Abd al-Rahman further fueled hostilities between the dominant Sunnis and minority Shias, causing Sunni religious leaders to issue a *fitwa* (legal ruling) declaring Shia Hazaras *kafir* (infidel). The *fitwa* gave Abd al-Rahman a pretext for legal action against the Hazaras. Although Abd al-Rahman proclaimed Hazaras to be infidels, he himself did not abide by Islamic precepts and did not perform the five daily prayers. His personal physician wrote, "His Highness the Amir does not pray, at least so far as I know. I have never seen him do so."⁷ Abd al-Rahman justified the war on Hazaras by depicting them as mercenaries who threatened the safety of caravans and travelers and sided with alien powers to destabilize the country. This characterization was not accurate; Abd al-Rahman's personal physician wrote that the Hazaras were "compared to the Afghans, a hard working peaceful people, unless they were roused by cruelty and oppression; then, indeed, they fought with dogged persistence."⁸ Hazaras were enslaved, and it became common practice for affluent families to own one or more young Hazara slaves. At fifty rupees for boys or girls

under the age of twelve and thirty rupees for older children, they were considered a bargain; friends and state functionaries would offer each other Hazara slaves as gifts. Abd al-Rahman encouraged the settlement of a number of Pashtun tribes, including the Ghilzais from Jalalabad and Laghman and Qandahar in Hazarajat, on the vacated lands; he used the settlers as an auxiliary force to maintain his authority in the region. He partitioned Hazarajat into three administrative regions and appointed Pashtun administrators to ensure Hazaras' compliance with his rulings. Although Abd al-Rahman abolished slavery and taxes on the sale of Hazaras in 1897, Hazaras remained *de facto* slaves. Both Abd al-Rahman and his successor, his son Habibullah, retained their *Kaniz*, *Surati*, odalisques, and *Ghulam Bacha* (eunuchs) in their palace's *harems*.⁹

Abd al-Rahman launched a military offensive on *Kafiristan*, brought the region under state control, and forced its residents to convert to Islam (the region was called Nooristan, meaning "land of light"). Abd al-Rahman died in 1901 and was succeeded by his son Habibullah. The new king depicted himself as a devout Muslim to gain the support of the religious establishment. He decreed women must not leave the home or visit the market or bazaars without a valid reason, otherwise they would be punished. He also ordered that women singers and entertainers of the Kabul Kharabat district must refrain from signing and performing and ordered the Hindu residents of the country to wear yellow turbans and their women to wear yellow *burqas* (veils) to distinguish them from Muslims; those who converted to Islam were given money and clothing as a token of state appreciation. Habibullah pardoned those who were exiled by his father, freed prisoners, and issued a decree that the Hazaras whose lands were given to the Pashtuns would be given state lands. However, there is no information about if or how the policy was implemented, and most Hazaras who settled in Pakistan, Iran, and central Asian did not return. Although Habibullah prohibited the sale of male and female slaves, he did not declare them to be free.

Habibullah initiated development programs on a modest scale—a few power plants to produce electricity for government-owned factories, construction of telephone lines between Kabul and Jalalabad, and printing of a newspaper, *Seraj al-Akhbar*. He also promoted modern education: in 1903 he built the Habibiya School to train civil service personnel; in 1909, *Maktab-e-Harbiya* (the War College) to train army officers; in 1913, *Dar al-Moalimin*, a teacher training school; and other schools such as *Maktab-e-Malikzadagan-e-Junubi* (School for Southern Nobilities) and *Jadid al-Islam* (School for Children), in

Nooristan, whose people recently embraced Islam. Modern schools were established mainly in Kabul, while in the countryside children received their education in private *madrasas*. Habibullah did not expand modern education further, as he viewed an educated strata as a potential threat to his rule; those educated in modern schools agitated for constitutionalism. Habibullah spent much of his time in pursuit of pleasure-seeking hobbies and did not pay much attention to the living conditions of his subjects. When religious leaders awarded him the title *Seraj al-Millat wa Din* (Torch of the Nation and Religion), he decided to commemorate the occasion and demanded contributions from the citizenry for decorating the bazaar, ignorant of the fact that people were poor and had suffered losses from a recent drought season and cold winter. When they attended the bazaar, many looted whatever they could lay their hands on.

Throughout his life Habibullah observed his treaty obligations with the British and, like his father, remained loyal to them. Nationalists and constitutionalists were dismayed by his style of leadership, despised his loyalty to the British, and agitated for independence, regarding it as a prerequisite for sociopolitical and economic development. Although a segment of the conservative ruling elite also supported independence, their objective was to isolate Afghanistan from the international community to safeguard the traditional sociopolitical system. Habibullah's negligence to heed the calls of these forces cost him his life when a secret group in the palace working with the constitutionalists murdered him on February 20, 1919, in Kalagush, Laghman Province, while he was on a vacation. His son Amanullah and a few high officials are alleged to have had a role in the politically motivated assassination. Habibullah's assassination resulted in a power struggle between the conservatives and modernists. In Jalalabad, Habibullah's brother Nasrullah was supported by the conservatives and they proclaimed him king. Habibullah's younger son Amanullah was governor of Kabul and he was supported by the modernists. Amanullah's popularity helped him gain the support of the army and he was proclaimed king in Kabul; soon afterward, Nasrullah and his associates were forced to surrender to him.

STATE AND SOCIETY IN THE POSTINDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Amanullah was born in 1892 and developed into a progressive leader inclined toward reforms. After assuming power he declared his determination to liberate Afghanistan from British rule. His espousal of

nationalism helped him gain popularity among the discontented people and modernists who agitated for independence. Across the border, as a Socialist system arose in Russia in October 1917, Amanullah and his associates accelerated their plans to mobilize people for independence. Amanullah addressed the nation, stating on April 13, 1919, "I proclaim myself and my country completely free, independent and sovereign in all domestic and foreign issues. My country will thus become an independent state, just as other countries of the world."¹⁰ The declaration of independence eventually led to the Third Anglo-Afghan War. The British launched a major offensive in Afghanistan in May 1919, but were defeated and recognized Afghanistan's independence by signing the Treaty of Rawalpindi on August 8, 1919.

The Soviet Union recognized Afghanistan's independence and Amanullah sent a letter to the Soviet leadership requesting an exchange of ambassadors between the two countries. The Soviet leadership responded positively and dispatched its ambassador Pal Alexander Bravin to Kabul in September 1919. The Soviet government declared void all treaties imposed on Afghanistan by the former tsarist regime and welcomed Afghanistan's independence. In October 1919 Amanullah sent a delegation headed by General Mohammad Wali to Moscow with a message to the Soviet leadership expressing Afghanistan's support for Soviet policy regarding anticolonial and national liberation struggles. At a banquet, the Afghan delegation assured the Soviet leadership that Afghanistan was seeking similar objectives to theirs in its foreign policy. They stated that all colonized nations in the east could be liberated from colonial domination with the help of the Soviet Union.¹¹ Afghanistan and Soviet officials also discussed the fate of the disputed Darqad Island, situated in the Oxus River, and the Soviets agreed to evacuate the island; in 1926 they signed a protocol returning the island to Afghanistan. Relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union strengthened further after the two countries concluded cultural, educational, and technical treaties in February 1921. Amanullah reflected upon the significant influence of the Soviets in Afghanistan in a letter in 1920 addressed to Soviet leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, stating that Afghanistan learned "the noble ideas and intentions of the Soviet Republic regarding the liberation of the Eastern World" through the Turkish leader Jemal Pasha.¹²

Amanullah worked to expand Afghanistan's relations with the international community and established formal relations with Turkey. The two countries concluded a treaty of friendship in March 1921 recognizing each other's independence; Turkey provided Afghanistan with military and cultural assistance. The signing of the treaty

was significant to the Pan-Islamic movement promoting solidarity throughout the Muslim world. Afghanistan also established relations with its neighbor Iran and the two countries signed an agreement in June 1921 recognizing each other's independence. Italy and Afghanistan signed a treaty of friendship that same year. After the Soviet Union recognized Afghanistan, the British felt more at ease, as Afghanistan became a sovereign buffer state separating British India from the Soviet Union. Britain established formal relations with Afghanistan in 1921, followed by France in 1922 and Germany a year later. The British became apprehensive about the growing ties between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, viewing their warming relationship as a security threat to India because Amanullah supported independence movements on the Indian subcontinent by providing arms and ammunition, publishing anti-British pamphlets, and permitting Indian nationals and revolutionaries to settle in Afghanistan to conduct political activities for the liberation of their homeland. A well-known anti-British activist in the Pashtun-settled regions of India was Abdul Ghafar Khan, who formed a nonviolent movement, *Khodayi Khidmatgaran* (Servants of God), which became known as the Red Shirt movement. This group was committed to the anti-British struggle on the Indian subcontinent and sought closer ties with the leadership in Kabul. A provisional Free India government was formed by an Indian national, Mahendra Pratap, with Barakatullah as prime minister, Mawlawi Obaidullah as minister of the interior, and Pratap himself as president. This government maintained contact with the revolutionaries in India and solicited international support for their cause.

Modernization of State and Society

Amanullah was determined to modernize the country following a European model, not realizing that Afghanistan's social, cultural, and political milieu was far behind those of the economically advanced European countries, where the bourgeoisie defeated the ruling feudal classes and succeeded in establishing a modern civil society. The European Enlightenment ideals and the 1917 October Socialist revolution in Russia influenced Amanullah as he embarked on a bourgeois revolution without a bourgeois class—a strategic error that ultimately led to the collapse of his progressive reforms and his leadership. Despite his errors in judgment and lack of political maturity, he was a pioneer of modernity. One of his major accomplishments was the promulgation of a seventy-three-article constitution on April 9, 1923. It

provided a blueprint for building a modern civil society, delineated the responsibilities of the king and state officials, stressed local economic development, and abolished slavery. Articles eight and ten stated,

Article 8: All persons residing in the kingdom of Afghanistan, without respect to religious or sectarian differences, are considered to be subjects of Afghanistan. Afghan citizenship may be obtained or lost in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate law.

Article 10: Personal freedom is immune from all forms of violation or encroachment. No person may be arrested or punished other than pursuant to an order issued by a *Sharia* court or in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws. The principle of slavery is completely abolished. No man or woman can employ others as slaves.¹³

The constitution recognized the equal status of all nationalities, defined the individual rights and freedoms of its people, and accorded religious freedom to all faiths. Shias could practice their faith openly without fear of intimidation or reprisals by individuals or public institutions. Non-Muslim communities, Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs were also granted the right to practice their faiths and the state allowed Hindu and Sikh children to enroll in military schools; many subsequently became army officers.¹⁴ The state urged citizens to refrain from the practice of sacrificing cows during Muslim religious festivities out of sensitivity to Hindu nationals, who regard cows as sacred in their faith. Abolishment of slavery led to the freedom of an estimated seven hundred Hazara slaves in Kabul who were enslaved during the reign of Amanullah's grandfather, Abd al-Rahman. The state initiated a number of reforms to modernize the judiciary system. The penal code, as well as laws dealing with civil and property rights, were codified, with the primary objective being to emasculate the power of religious institutions in dispensing justice and to strengthen the secular authority of state institutions.

Amanullah's reforms in the social arena included emancipation of women, introduction of monogamy, and separation of religion from politics. The state set up adult learning courses in an effort to counter widespread illiteracy. Amanullah himself taught some of the classes and pushed for the recruitment of itinerant teachers that fanned out to remote and nomadic communities. To counter current gaps in literacy and adult education he launched a serious educational system to educate children who would otherwise have no access to education. He established modern schools: the Amaniya School, which was named for him, was founded in 1922. It followed the German educational

model and was staffed with German faculty and staff. Istiqlal, which was founded a year later, followed the French model of education. A teacher training college was also established that same year. In 1924 *Maktab-e-Hukkam*, a school for training administrators, was established, as well as a school of fine arts. The Ghazi School, established in 1927, followed the British model of education, with classes taught in English. French, German, and English language courses were added to the school curriculum. Amanullah believed that the influences of modern education would enhance and broaden the tenets and objectives of religious education and the visions of religious teachers and clerics. He spoke of the value of a comprehensive and modern educational system:

We are keenly alive to the value of education. But to bring learning to my people must be a slow process . . . We hope to lay our plans well and truly, but not too fast. Religion must march hand in hand with learning, else both fall into the ditch. This country is rich in fine men and magnificent material resources, both as yet undeveloped. It is my hope to invite experts from all over the world—including America—to help me in my plans. But, frankly, Afghanistan is for the Afghans, and I intend my people to enjoy the fruits of their labors, not foreign capitalists.¹⁵

Compulsory elementary education was founded by the state, which also provided stipends and other material support for those students continuing beyond primary education in an effort to encourage poor and dispossessed families to send their children to school rather than straight into the fields as farms laborers.

In 1921 a number of students were dispatched to France for advanced studies; a year later several more students were sent to Germany, Turkey, Iran, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.¹⁶ Amanullah imposed a coeducational system at the Amaniya School, which admitted both boys and a few girls, and hired female instructors from France, Germany, Turkey, and India to teach science courses and foreign language classes. In 1928 several female graduates of the *Mas-turat* middle school traveled to Turkey to complete their advanced education. Most of these girls were the daughters of ruling family members or government officials, and the state intended that they would serve as a public example and inspiration for others to follow. Amanullah's wife, Soraya, steered the establishment of the first girls-only primary school in Kabul in 1921, with her mother Asma Rasmiyah Tarzi serving as the school principal and two nieces, Belqis and Rohafza, employed to assist her.¹⁷ Residents were encouraged to take

advantage of these educational opportunities for their daughters, and civil servants in particular were encouraged to educate their daughters so they could inspire other parents to do the same. During Amanullah's rule, schools were built in most parts of the country; in 1929 there were 322 schools with 510,000 students. Amanullah wanted to establish a university, *Dar al-Olum*, in Kabul, but conservatives opposed such an enterprise, as they could not reach a consensus on the basic orientation of the university. Despite setbacks, his reign is regarded as the golden period of modern education in Afghanistan.

Amanullah discouraged polygamy and became a staunch protagonist of women's rights and equality. To protect women's rights, in August 1924 he introduced laws concerning engagements and marriages. The law stressed gender equality and established a minimum age for marriage. The state encouraged girls to choose their marriage partners themselves rather than submit to arranged marriages or other parental interference, and women were informed of their rights to take legal action against their spouses if they were abused. In 1921 Asma Rasmiyah Tarzi was tapped to edit *Irshad-e-Niswan* (The Guide for Women), a state-funded weekly of writings intended to raise women's awareness of their place and rights in society as well as fuel their social and political consciousness. It also provided lighter fare, such as recipes and news on the latest fashions and homemaking trends.¹⁸ The state improved the public health system by bringing medical practices under state control, an attempt to eliminate traditional medical practitioners, *bakims*, who lacked modern medical knowledge. In 1923 two hospitals were built in Kabul, one for men and one for women. The hospital for women, *Masturat*, was administered by Amanullah's sister, Bibigul, known as Seraj al-Banat.

One major modernization project included the importation of printing presses and the establishment of private and state-owned papers, all of which emphasized three interrelated topics essential for nation building: independence, nationalism, and modernization. In 1919 a semiofficial paper, *Aman-e-Afghanistan* (Afghan Peace), was published in Kabul, and by 1928 it became a daily paper. In 1924 a second paper, *Haqiqat* (Truth) began publication in Kabul, and in 1927 *Anis* (Companion), a private paper, was published in the capital and a number of government ministries published their own journals. The state also published papers in major provinces such as Nangarhar, Herat, Qandahar, Baghlan, and Balkh.

Nation building necessitated modernizing the armed forces and police force to defend the country and maintain law and order. The military was organized on the Turkish and German model and plants

were built to manufacture military items, although most military equipment was purchased from the West. Modern aviation was introduced as early as 1921, when Amanullah acquired a British fighter plane and more planes were purchased or provided to him by Britain and the Soviet Union as gifts. By the end of 1920 the country had twenty-two fighter planes, and students were sent to Italy, India, and the Soviet Union to be trained as pilots and mechanics. The aviation industry was largely geared to transporting cargo and passengers, mainly government officials and members of the diplomatic community in Kabul. Maintaining stability also required the improvement of roads to facilitate movement of the army as well as goods and merchandise to develop the economy. The state repaired and built roads, and hotels and restaurants were built to accommodate the needs of travelers. Amanullah was determined to establish a modern railway system, but this project diverted his efforts from building more roads; only a small amount of track of was laid, which was expected to link Kabul to Jalalabad.

As part of its economic development in 1924, the state decreed the sale of state land to government officials, businessmen, and wealthy landowners and supported the resettlement of *Kochis* (Pashtun nomads) from the southern to the northern regions of the country. The state abolished *begari* (impressed labor) except in the national services. During a speech Amanullah stated,

At present I abolish at the outset the system of *begari*, impressed labor, in the country. Henceforth no labor will be impressed, and not a single individual will be employed by force from among you in making roads, working on public works, tree-cutting, etc. And by the grace of God our sublime government will employ such measures of reform as may prove suitable and useful to the country and nation so that the Government and nation of Afghanistan may make and gain great renown in the civilized world and take its proper place among the civilized powers of the world. For the rest, I pray to God for his favors and mercy and seek his help for the welfare and prosperity of you Muslims and all mankind.¹⁹

The state encouraged trade and private investment, and facilitated this through subsidizing private industries. The state's industrialization program was aimed at investment of internal capital in productive industries. The state abolished domestic trade barriers—tariffs and customs—and fixed the amount of taxes on imported items. The peasantry did not benefit from the reforms, could not afford to

buy state land, and continued to be exploited by feudal landowners. Implementation of the reforms—payment of taxes in kind instead of cash—caused tremendous suffering and anger among the poor peasants and farmers, as they were forced to borrow from feudal landowners and businessmen to pay taxes; they demanded a reduction in taxes and remained indifferent toward the reforms.

Amanullah's negligence of the deteriorating social conditions of the peasantry and opposition within the state provided feudal landowners, conservative religious leaders, and *Mullahs* (clerics), aided and abetted by the British government, the opportunity and audience for spreading antistate propaganda. Opposition by religious leaders and *Mullahs* to socioeconomic reform was not a manifestation of their religious prejudices, but rather an expression of their class interests, as a great number of them were landowners or were on their payrolls. Government officials within the state apparatus were divided into those supporting and those opposing the reforms. The intensification of this struggle reduced the efficacy of the state to the extent that it could not respond to the complaints of the peasants concerning feudal exploitation and those of the disadvantaged social strata against the tyranny of some state officials who supported feudal landowners. The state's radical policy of socioeconomic development, land reform, and modernization of educational institutions damaged the interests of many social strata, particularly those of feudal landowners, influential clerics, and high government officials who were also landowners. Deprived of their privileges, the feudal landowners and the highest religious circles (the Mojaddadi family, known as the *Hazrat-e-Shorbazar*, and the family of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jailani, known as the *Naqib Sahib*) were engaged in turning public opinion against Amanullah on the grounds that he violated Islamic law and the traditions of the prophet Muhammad.²⁰

A rebellion broke out in Khost in March 1924 that lasted until January 1925. The reasons for rebellion were dissatisfaction of the tribal communities with the state policy of taxation, itinerant businessmen demanded free trade, and feudal landowners were not happy with the state policy of serving in the army. Opposition forces also demanded that Amanullah divorce his wife and close down all foreign missions except those of the British. The rebellion was headed by *Mullah-e-Lang* (the lame cleric), his brother Abdul Rashid, and Abdul Karim, grandson of former King Shir Ali, who intended to seize power. It is suggested that the British sent Abdul Karim to work with Mangal leaders and tribesmen to form an antistate front in the south. Although the state suppressed the uprising, the threat of more

rebellions compelled Amanullah to temporarily rescind some of his reforms and modify several others (e.g., directing women to receive schooling at home, encouraging religious studies prior to learning foreign languages, allowing men to marry four wives, establishing Arabic classes, and substituting cash or commodities in exchange for service in the army). These concessions and others did not appease the tribal chiefs and conservative clerics, and they continued to oppose Amanullah's leadership.

To consolidate his grip on power, Amanullah purged those he suspected of having a role in the rebellion. It is argued that Amanullah's minister of war, General Mohammad Nadir, opposed Amanullah's radical reform policies; he and his brothers were indirectly involved in the Khost rebellion. Nadir had cultivated closer ties with the Basmachi movement and its leaders, and it has been suggested that he plotted to assassinate Amanullah and seize power.²¹ Amanullah named Nadir as ambassador to France in 1924 and named Nadir's half brother, Mohammad Hashim, as ambassador to Moscow. As relations between Amanullah and Nadir worsened, Nadir and Hashim resigned from their posts in 1926 and remained in Europe, causing Amanullah to forbid the marriage of his sister, Noor al-Seraj, to Mohammad Hashim.²² Although opposition and rebellion against modernization programs caused Amanullah to decelerate the pace of his drive to modernity for a short time, he did not abandon his aspirations for transforming Afghanistan into a modern civil society. In 1925 the first radio station was built in Kabul, the state standardized the weight system by introducing the metric system, and telephone and telegram service was established to link the capital with major provincial town such as Herat in the west and Peshawar in Pakistan, and by 1927 the country joined the International Postal Union. Another major project in the drive toward modernity was the building of a new capital about ten kilometers from the center of Kabul, *Dar al-Aman*, where Amanullah laid the foundation for a modern palace and government offices.

Between December 1927 and June 1928 Amanullah, his wife Soraya, and members of his entourage visited several countries in Europe, as well as India, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. While Amanullah's opponents regarded his visit abroad as a pleasure trip, he himself characterized the trip as a voyage intended to learn from the experiences of these countries so he could apply what he learned to modernize Afghanistan. Amanullah also intended to use the trip to introduce Afghanistan to the outside world. He was welcomed in the countries he visited and was impressed by what he observed

in these countries and became even more determined to transform Afghanistan into a modern society.

In August 1928 Amanullah convened a *Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of Tribal Leaders) in Kabul and presented his policies on social, cultural, political, and economic reforms, including the rights and equality of women and fighting administrative corruption as bureaucrats used their positions to collect bribes and kickbacks. His wife Soraya accompanied him to the hall of the *Jirgah*, where she appeared without her veil. An estimated one hundred women also discarded their veils as they accompanied her to the *Jirgah* hall, to the praise and applause of progressive delegates. Predictably, conservatives and traditionalists were scandalized by their actions, calling it a transgression against Islamic values. These individuals also opposed the state policy of abolishing honorary titles, the special privileges of clerics, and prohibiting Deoband School graduates from teaching in Afghanistan. When the issue of establishment of the National Assembly was raised at the *Jirgah* a number of representatives objected to it, stating that if the cabinet is only responsible to the king and not to the National Assembly, the existence of such an institution does not make any difference in the political arena. Although representatives reluctantly endorsed Amanullah's proposals, after returning home conservatives mobilized public opinion against state policies, calling them anti-Islamic.

A number of Amanullah's modernization programs had no practical application to the daily lives of common people. Inhabitants of Kabul and people visiting the capital were ordered to wear European dress and hats; a reflection of Amanullah's Western tastes. Unfortunately this mandate imposed an economic burden on poor people who could not afford such expenses, and most stores in Kabul had few European clothes in stock. Conservatives also were distressed by this enforced change to their traditional dress. To ensure its implementation, harsh measures were adopted—signs were posted in areas of the city that prohibited entry to veiled women, and law enforcement officers fined anyone who did not obey the orders.²³ Not all of Amanullah's imposed cultural changes were onerous: the first women's theater was established in Paghman, Kabul, in 1921 in an effort to provide women with a respite from their normal and often boring routine of looking after children and performing household chores.

Amanullah's premature but aggressive pursuit of Western-style modernization programs and emphasis on education were well-intended, but people perceived his modernization programs as being counter to Islamic laws as they understood them and to their

traditional cultural values. While focused on his modernization efforts he neglected to expand his small army to defend the regime against possible external threats, ignored the growing corruption in the state apparatus during his last years of rule, and failed to combat efforts on the part of his enemies to conspire against his leadership. Anti-Amanullah forces were not well organized prior to and during the *Jirgah*, but over time they grew in strength. For example, after delegates from the eastern regions returned home they opposed Amanullah's reforms and incited people to rebellion. Amanullah arrested and executed Qazi Abdul Rahman, a religious leader who was believed to be mobilizing people against the state. Amanullah also removed a number of intellectuals from government posts who were critical of state policies and replaced them with individuals who were loyal to him. Amanullah failed to objectively analyze the political situation in the country prior to convening the *Jirgah* and could not create a mechanism for successful implementation of his policies. A backlash was inevitable.

In September 1928 Mohammad Sadiq Mojaddadi, brother of Fazl Omar Mojaddadi, a prominent religious leader, began a petition among clerics that declared Amanullah to be anti-Islam; he collected four hundred signatures and organized a rebellion in Paktiya. The state suppressed the rebellion, executed four clerics, and sentenced members of the Mojaddadi family to life imprisonment.²⁴ As opposition continued to mount, a number of state officials also began to turn against Amanullah. The opposition distributed copies of photographs that had been published by newspapers in Europe during Amanullah's official visit of his wife Soraya wearing a low-cut gown at public functions. The distribution of these photographs was intended to raise the ire of more provincial tribal peoples in the frontier areas and turn the public against Amanullah. The opposition stated that Amanullah and his wife were attempting to undermine Islamic values by promoting Western culture and called for a *jihad* (war) in order to restore Islamic order. A British national, Colonel Thomas E. Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia, is regarded by most intellectuals in Afghanistan to have played a role in instigating an anti-Amanullah rebellion when he went to the border region on a secret mission on September 13, 1928, under the alias Shaw; however, the British government steadfastly denied any involvement in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The Shinwari tribes rebelled against the state in November 1928, causing Amanullah to temporarily cease most of his reforms on January 6, 1929.

The measure was intended to buy time to restore stability and defuse the volatile situation. Girls attending schools in Constantinople were ordered to return home and the state closed local schools for girls. The India-based Deoband School graduates regained the right to teach in Afghanistan. Prohibitions against women appearing in public unveiled or cutting their hair were reimposed. Many traditional tribal systems were reinstated and compulsory military service was discontinued; *muh̄tasibs* (religious enforcement officials) were reinstated and assigned to each province to ensure the strict observance of religious precepts. Teaching certificates were no longer required for clerics and religious leaders, including the Mojaddadi family members, who were released from jail as a conciliatory gesture to the opposition.²⁵

These measures by Amanullah did not appease religious leaders. On January 14, 1929, Habibullah, known by the derogatory name *Bacha-e-Sagaw* (the water carrier's son; a reference to his father's occupation), organized a group of armed men and attacked Kabul. Amanullah was forced to abdicate the throne in favor of his elder brother Enayatullah. Habibullah was supported by the general public, as he personified the aspirations of conservative Muslims against a movement they perceived as a threat to their culture and traditional values. Amanullah left Kabul and retreated in Qandahar. Enayatullah sent a delegation to meet Habibullah to inform him of Amanullah's abdication of power and to negotiate an end to the armed conflict by asking him for his allegiance. Mohammad Sadiq, also known as Hazrat, was a member of the delegation who proposed to Habibullah that instead of recognizing Enayatullah he should support Mohammad Osman, president of the state council and a close relative of General Nadir, as the king. It has been suggested that Habibullah had no intention of seizing power until that time and during negotiations his close aide Shir Jan convinced him not to accept the leadership of Mohammad Osman and instead to proclaim himself king. Habibullah told the delegate that he recognized neither Enayatullah nor Mohammad Osman and insisted that Enayatullah must leave Kabul.²⁶

After three days Enayatullah left Kabul for Peshawar and then joined Amanullah in Qandahar. Amanullah tried to gain the support of the people of Qandahar to fight Habibullah, but the city's population only reluctantly responded to his call. However, he managed to organize a small force to recapture Kabul, but was defeated and left for Italy in March 1929. Prior to his departure the state disintegrated as rival individuals proclaimed themselves king; in Jalalabad, Ali Ahmad declared himself king, and in Khost, Ghausuddin, the chief of a Ghilzai Pashtun tribe, declared himself king. Some of Amanullah's

influential supporters who served as the country's ambassadors to Europe returned to Afghanistan to help restore Amanullah to power. Shuja al-Dawla, ambassador to London, returned to Herat, and Ghulam Nabi Charkhi, ambassador to Russia, returned to Balkh in April 1929; when they learned that Amanullah had left the country, they left as well. Although the British were not happy with Amanullah and did not support him when he tried to organize an army and regain power, their representative in India, Austen Chamberlain, stressed British neutrality with regard to the events unfolding in Afghanistan:

His Majesty's Government has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by supporting or assisting any of the parties at present contending for power in that country. They earnestly desire the establishment of a strong central government and they will be prepared when this government is established to show their friendship for the Afghan people by giving it such assistance as they can in reconstruction and development of the country. King Amanullah has formally announced his abdication to His Majesty's Government and consequently until it is clear that in spite of this abdication he is regarded as their king by the people of Afghanistan generally, His Majesty's Government is unable to regard his government as the rightful Afghan Government . . . It is for the Afghan people alone to determine who is to sit on the Afghan throne and his Majesty's Government awaits their decision.²⁷

Amanullah had a staunch supporter in British India—head of the Red Shirt movement, Abdul Ghafar Khan, who condemned the British for interference in Afghanistan's affairs and tried to prevent the flow of arms to anti-Amanullah forces. The British policy toward development in Afghanistan rested on the idea that the ensuing civil strife would generate public dismay with Habibullah's rule and would pave the way for acceptance of a new leader, General Nadir, whom the British regarded as the best man to seize power and restore peace and stability on their terms.

Amanullah's defeat can be attributed to his failure to organize an effective anti-Habibullah campaign; he limited his efforts to distribution of anti-Habibullah leaflets that accused him of illegally seizing power, but he failed to articulate political themes that would appeal to a wide spectrum of the people to support him and his political agendas. He tried to change things too quickly and lacked a balanced and objective picture of the situation and the organizational skills to make things work. He did not fight to the end because he believed that resistance would ruin the country and bring disaster to the nation.

When Afghanistan's military attaché based in Iran met Amanullah in Qandahar and informed him of the Iranian decision to support him he refused the offer, regarding it as interference in the country's internal affairs. In a farewell address he expressed his feelings toward the nation stating, "I do not care whether I put on the crown or a feather on my cap—whether I sit on a throne or on a plank. All I care about is service for my country."²⁸ Amanullah resigned himself to a life in exile; his recognition of the leadership in Kabul disillusioned progressive forces and convinced them they could not rely on aristocrats and members of the upper class to lead a people-oriented movement for change. Amanullah died on April 26, 1960, in Switzerland and his body was brought home and buried in Jalalabad, Nangarhar (King Zahir did not allow his body to be buried in Kabul, an attempt to obliterate his legacy). Amanullah did not write any memoirs reflecting on the British colonial policies toward Afghanistan or discussing how reactionary religious forces incited the public uprising that forced him to leave the country.

HABIBULLAH KALAKANI AND THE CIVIL WAR OF 1929

Habibullah was born in Kalakan district of Kabul around 1890 and was recruited as a soldier in the *Qita-e-Namuna* (model battalion) of Amanullah's army in Mahtab Qalah, Kabul. He was sent to deal with the anti-Amanullah rebellion in Khost in 1924. After suppressing the rebellion, he went to Jalalabad and freed his friends from prison and returned to Kabul. In Parwan he encountered a group of thieves, and after killing one and seizing their guns, he went to the Ministry of Defense to explain the situation to officials there. State officials did not investigate the issue and allowed him to go home, where he was arrested by local government officials who attributed some of the robberies in the area to him. Habibullah fled to Peshawar, in British India (North-West Frontier Province [NWFP] of present-day Pakistan), where he ran a tea shop. Kabul sent a note to the British requesting that they arrest and extradite Habibullah to Kabul, but the British did not find any proof to substantiate the case against him and let him stay in Peshawar. Later he went to Parachinar and was arrested on felony charges and sentenced to eleven months of imprisonment. Habibullah returned to his hometown of Kalakan and organized a group of armed men to fight the local government. The Tajik peasants in Kalakan supported Habibullah's rebellion against the state and helped him avoid arrest by state law enforcement agents. In his autobiography, which is

claimed to have been written on Habibullah's order (Habibullah was illiterate), he writes, "I was Lord of Kohistan, and ruler of the caravans, and my name was known throughout Afghanistan . . . I realized that to enhance and sustain my position, I must not rest on my laurels. Moreover, I could not continue indefinitely as a mere robber of the trade routes . . . I must do more than that."²⁹

Habibullah captured Kabul and told a welcoming crowd that he was dismayed with the anti-Islamic activities of Amanullah and was going to save Islam. He told the crowd that he would not spend public funds to build schools and offices, but would give them to the army and to the clerics to pray, and would not levy taxes on the people so that they could enjoy their lives.³⁰ Habibullah declared amnesty to soldiers of the royal guard, who were mainly from Qandahar; this earned him the trust of the people of Qandahar, who later withdrew their support from Amanullah. He assured the safety of the immediate family members of the king and executed a number of government officials whom he perceived to be a threat to his rule. He abolished the constitution and abrogated sociopolitical and economic reforms initiated by Amanullah. The well-known conservative religious leader Mojaddadi awarded Habibullah the appellation of *Khadim-e-dini Rasul-u-llah* (servant of the faith of the prophet) and he then became known as Habibullah Ghazi. Habibullah was supported by the people in Kohdaman, his native home, the conservative Pashtun tribes of Ghilzais, and a number of religious leaders.

Habibullah relied on a close circle of friends to help him consolidate his leadership; he appointed his brother Hamidullah as his second in command, his brother Ata al-Haq as foreign minister, and trusted aides to high positions in the government, including Sayed Hussein as minister of war, Shir Jan as his chamberlain, and Malik Mohsin as governor of Kabul. A group of reformist bureaucrats and technocratic elites who were dismayed with Amanullah supported Habibullah and legitimized his leadership on the basis of Islam by publishing a newspaper, *Habib-al-Islam* (Friend of Islam) edited by Sayed Mohammad Hussein and later by Burhanuddin Kushkaki. The newspaper propagated conservative social and political agendas and appealed for public support of Habibullah's rule. A pro-Habibullah group tried to expand the writ of the state, establishing contacts with individuals in the provinces who opposed Amanullah's reforms. In the Maimana Province they also gained the support of central Asian refugees—the Basmachis, who organized to fight the Soviets—and seized control of Balkh, Herat, and Qandahar. Pro-Amanullah forces were in disarray and became so socially and politically demoralized that they

could not effectively fight Habibullah. Although schools remained closed and laws were reinstated that allowed polygamy, Habibullah's advisors declared that the state planned to reopen some of the schools in Kabul. During the reopening ceremony of a school for foreign language instruction, Habibullah's close aide Qiyamuddin stressed the importance of learning "the language of the unbelievers, without the knowledge of which it was impossible to have normal relations with foreign states."³¹ Despite attempts by Habibullah's aides to convince the international community to recognize him as the legitimate leader of the country, resident ambassadors declined to recognize his administration, although they did not go so far as to terminate diplomatic ties with Afghanistan.

During Habibullah's short rule the state treasury went bankrupt, trade came to a standstill, and businesses closed as roads connecting Kabul to the outside world remained closed. A huge amount of money was expended for military purposes and distributed to the tribal chiefs, who demanded financial reward in exchange for their loyalty and support. To replenish the state treasury Habibullah levied heavy taxes that caused more suffering for the peasants and seized the lands of rich Pashtun landowners and distributed them to the people of his hometown. Although Habibullah accused Amanullah's government of corruption, he too could not rein in venal bureaucratic officials under his rule, and they continued to exploit the peasantry. Political support for Habibullah gradually declined due to growing economic difficulties and rampant corruption in the government. Experienced technocrats who supported him were dismayed and began to oppose him; religious leaders who initially supported him became disillusioned. The Pashtuns, who earlier had supported Habibullah, turned against him as they perceived themselves to be subordinated to Tajiks of lower pedigree. Hazaras opposed him and fought to restore Amanullah to power because he had abolished their slavery. As opposition to Habibullah mounted, a group of men in Kabul tried to assassinate him. After a member of the group, Qari Dost Mohammad, betrayed his team and informed Habibullah's administration, Habibullah arrested and summarily executed them, including the informant, despite mediation by Habibullah's close aides to spare his life. Habibullah viewed the informant as a traitor. A pro-Amanullah group also tried to assassinate Habibullah, but were unsuccessful; they were likewise arrested and executed.³²

Anti-Habibullah uprisings broke out in Panjshir, Kapisa, Ghorband, and other regions. To quell further uprisings Habibullah and his

advisors decided to recruit former influential officials and extended an invitation to General Nadir to return. He refused the offer; however, he and his brothers left Europe and arrived in Khost, Paktiya Province, via British India on March 8, 1929, and tried to seize power. Initially Nadir declared that he intended to restore Amanullah to the throne. He was greeted by a large number of Muslims and Hindus in India who regarded Amanullah as a hero of the national liberation movement. They declared their readiness to go to Qandahar to support Amanullah in his struggle to regain the throne and requested Nadir assist Amanullah, however,

[Nadir] had his own reason for not committing himself absolutely one way or the other. He would first see how far Amanullah had alienated the sympathies of the tribes before he chalked out his line of action. Only at Lahore station, perhaps moved by the unprecedented enthusiasm of thousands of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs . . . did the General in an unguarded moment declare that "he would not rest until he had seen Amanullah back on the throne of his ancestors." Otherwise his general line was that "he would do or say nothing for Amanullah until he had received a verdict of the tribes in a *Jirgah*."³³

Nadir and his brothers remained in Paktiya, where he had support among the local feudal landowners and tribal communities on the other side of the Durand Line. Habibullah sent Nadir's brother, Shah Mahmood, to win Nadir's support for him and as a gesture of goodwill appointed Shah Mahmood governor of Paktiya. Soon after Shah Mahmood arrived in Paktiya he joined his brother's campaign to oust Habibullah.

When opposition to Habibullah's rule increased in Paktiya, Wardak, Hazarajat, and the northern areas, Nadir organized a volunteer tribal army, declaring that he would fight to save the country and end the civil war. He stated that he had no ill intentions toward Amanullah, a tactic intended to rally people still loyal to Amanullah, and promised that after he seized Kabul he would convene a *Loya Jirgah* where representatives of the people could elect the future king. By making such promises Nadir intended to persuade the people that he was not fighting for his own interests, but was defending the interests of the public. Nadir did not achieve much success at the beginning because of intertribal conflicts and the reluctance of the peasants in Paktiya to fight, as they still believed in Habibullah's promise to relieve their tax burden. But the worsening economic situation caused them to

turn against Habibullah, allowing Nadir to exploit the situation to his advantage.

Nadir and his brothers began anti-Habibullah campaigns, such as calling him a Tajik bandit who usurped power from the Pashtuns. Nadir sought to use prejudice against Habibullah's Tajik ethnicity to stir tribal resentment among the Pashtuns and to rally support for his own bid for power. Nadir sponsored the publication of an underground paper, *Islah* (Reformation), and secretly sent copies to Kabul, encouraging people to fight Habibullah.

Nadir was defeated twice in battles with Habibullah's army, but during a third offensive on October 10, 1929, he defeated Habibullah and forced him to retreat to Kohdaman, where tribesmen supported and protected him. Habibullah was unable to develop social and political policies that appealed to a wide spectrum of the population, and the Russian and British authorities did not view him as an effective agent to defend their political agendas in the region. The British supported Nadir because they considered him an astute politician who could not only lessen Soviet influence in Afghanistan but also strengthen the country's ties with Britain. Habibullah's nine-month rule collapsed and Nadir assumed leadership of the country, declaring himself king.

Habibullah was a charismatic individual who was admired by conservative Islamic figures of the Tajik as well as some Tajik writers and scholars. Khalilullah Khalili, a close aide to King Mohammad Zahir (1933–73) and his ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Iran, characterized Habibullah as an *Aiyar* (a hero) who defended Islam and the interests of the poor. Khalili's father, Mohammad Hussain, who served as financial secretary to Abd al-Rahman and his successor Habibullah, was executed in the early period of Amanullah's rule. His maternal uncle, Abdul Rahim, was Habibullah's close confidant and served as governor of Herat during Habibullah's rule. Habibullah was reviled by King Nadir, his successor Zahir, and their tribal communities, who called him a Tajik bandit and referred to the period in which he ruled as the darkest period in Afghanistan's history.

THE MOHAMMADZAI CLAN AND BRITISH INFLUENCE

Nadir was born in 1883 in British India. His father, Mohammad Yousuf, was exiled by King Abd al-Rahman to India, where Nadir and his brothers received education and training. It is argued that when Abd al-Rahman's confidant Abdul Qudus requested him

to allow Yousuf to return to Afghanistan, Abd al-Rahman refused, saying that if he allowed him to return, he and his brothers would collaborate with the British to seize power from his son. After Abd al-Rahman's successor, Habibullah, declared a general amnesty, Yousuf and his brothers returned to Afghanistan, where they played key roles as Habibullah's confidants and, because of their close association with the king, became known as the *Musahibin* family. Habibullah married Yousuf's daughter in 1902, which helped her brothers Nadir, Hashim, and others gain recognition in the court. However, they did not achieve wider public recognition because they were raised in British India and were regarded by the people in Kabul as "the Indian boys." Nadir nurtured closer ties with Habibullah's son Amanullah and the constitutionalists in the court.³⁴ He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in the army in 1906. When the people of Paktiya rebelled against Habibullah's coercive measures of extorting money from the public, he successfully suppressed the rebellion and was subsequently promoted to the rank of commander in chief in 1913.

After Habibullah left Kabul and retreated to Kohistan, Nadir moved into Kabul and his tribal militias plundered the public treasury as their reward for fighting Habibullah; some of the militias even looted the carpets from the palace, cut them into pieces, and divided the pieces among them. Nadir was proclaimed king by his army of tribal militias on October 17, 1929. He sent an envoy to Habibullah in an attempt to convince him to come to Kabul for a meeting to discuss who should be king. In a bid to gain Habibullah's trust, Nadir wrote a note in the margin of a Quran promising Habibullah he would not come to any harm in Kabul. He affixed his personal seal to the note and had his close advisor Mojaddadi deliver the Quran to Habibullah. When Mojaddadi met Habibullah, one of Habibullah's trusted men, Sayed Hussein, advised him not to go to Kabul; he regarded Nadir as a man who did not keep his word. Habibullah disagreed and told his aide that he would go to Kabul and meet Nadir, as he had pledged not to harm him and his friends. Nadir's signature on the Quran was enough to convince the politically naïve Habibullah, and he and his men went to Kabul. Upon their arrival in Kabul, Nadir met Habibullah and sarcastically asked him about his objective in allowing so much bloodshed. Habibullah realized from the tone of his voice that Nadir would not abide by his agreement and responded that when he was in a position of authority he did whatever he thought was in the best interest of the country, and now that Nadir was in a position of authority he could do whatever he thought was in the best interest of the country.³⁵ Nadir executed Habibullah and

his seventeen lieutenants by firing squad on November 3, 1929, and hanged their bodies from poles as a message to dissuade their supporters from resisting and fighting his leadership.

Nadir believed that a leader must possess a dual personality: aggressive like a lion and manipulative like a fox. To maintain effective control of the state and society he relied on his brothers, appointing his half brother Mohammad Hashim as prime minister. He appointed other brothers to high positions: Shah Mahmood as minister of war, Shah Wali as his deputy, and Mohammad Aziz as ambassador to Moscow and later to Germany. Nadir appointed several immediate family members to senior government posts and promoted British Indian nationals to privileged positions inside and outside the state. Indian revolutionaries who had settled in Afghanistan were not allowed to engage in political activities and were subject to deportation if they did so, and a few were deported.³⁶

Nadir recognized the need for religion to legitimize his leadership and portrayed himself publicly as a devout religious man, while in practice he ignored religious ethos. Whenever Nadir met people or addressed the nation he made statements in which he frequently invoked God to demonstrate his piety and devotion to the cause of Islam and strict adherence to Islamic Sharia law. Nadir outlined his policies in similar fashion, stating that his administration would be strictly guided by the principles of the law of Islam. He stated that his government would build military schools and industries for manufacturing military equipment and weapons, and repair and improve communication and transportation infrastructures. He took steps to collect arrears of public revenues, promote foreign trade, and expand diplomatic relations with the international community. He also established the Council of State and made cabinet members' appointments subject to approval by the ruling family.³⁷ Nadir co-opted conservative clerics and tribal chiefs and placed them in positions of importance in the government, with the objective of securing their support. He rewarded some members of the influential Hazrat family of Shorbazar for their support by appointing them to key posts in the government. For example, Mojaddadi's brother Shir Agha became minister of justice and his other brother Mohammad Sayed was appointed minister of state; Hazrat himself became ambassador to Egypt.³⁸

Nadir severely dealt with his opponents, executing those who did not agree with his policies, including Ghulam Mohayuddin Arti, Taj Mohammad Paghmani, Faiz Mohammad Baroti, and Abdul Rahman Lodin, and well-known army officer Ghulam Nabi Charkhi, a staunch ally of Amanullah. When Charkhi was summoned to the palace, Nadir

told him that he had learned of Charkhi's support for the return of Amanullah and rebuked him. Charkhi responded that he fought to restore Amanullah because, like Nadir, he too was Amanullah's servant. The statement outraged Nadir and he told Charkhi to never think of him as Amanullah's servant; he then shot him to death with his pistol. It is argued that when his brother, Mohammad Hashim, questioned him as to why he killed Charkhi, he responded that in one country there cannot be two kings.³⁹

Nadir's adherence to Pashtun nationalism and tribalism earned him the support of the Pashtun tribes, making them the backbone of his government. He used the Pashtuns to suppress the uprisings of other ethnic and tribal communities against his rule; however, when Pashtuns rebelled against him he resorted to negotiation. When the Shinwari tribes rebelled against him in favor of Amanullah in May 1930, Nadir struck a deal with the tribal chiefs and brought the rebellious tribe under his control. When the Tajiks in Shamali, north of Kabul, rebelled against him in July 1930 he mobilized his Pashtun tribal army to eliminate the resistance and killed their leader, Pur Dil. Nadir seized their lands and distributed them among his tribal army, an act that so traumatized the Tajiks that the memory of it still haunts the people of the region. Nadir rewarded the Pashtuns of Paktiya and exempted them from paying taxes and from serving in the armed forces. In June 1931 Nadir fought the Basmachi leader Ibrahim Beg Lokai, who started a movement in the northern areas of the country in early 1930, forcing him to return to Soviet central Asia, where he surrendered to Soviet authorities and was executed in August 1932. Nadir crushed resistance to his rule by the Uzbeks and Turkmens, arresting an estimated one thousand men, women, and children of the community and sending them to Kabul. He appointed Pashtun bureaucrats to administer daily affairs in the non-Pashtun regions. Nadir's policy of governance was based on the colonial dictum "divide and conquer," pitting one ethnic group against another to perpetuate their instability and prevent them from organizing an uprising against him.

Nadir began a concerted effort to undermine what remained of Amanullah's reputation and image. State-owned newspapers published articles accusing Amanullah of betraying the country and fleeing to the West and praising Nadir as the savior of the nation. A monument, *Manar-e-Nijat* (Minaret of Salvation), was built in Joy-e-Mastan, in Kabul, to honor Nadir for putting an end to the civil war during Habibullah's rule; the minaret was demolished during the pro-Soviet government period (1978–89). Nadir convened a *Loya Jirgah*

in September 1930 that was dominated by his handpicked representatives. The *Jirgah* formally recognized Nadir as king and confirmed his policies, one of which included the revival of honorary titles for clerics and government officials, which had been abolished by Amanullah. The *Jirgah* charged a number of its members with the responsibility of drafting a constitution, which was promulgated on October 31, 1931, containing 110 articles. Civic and political liberties were largely curtailed, as was the freedom of religious groups to practice their faiths. Article 1 of the constitution stipulated that the Sunni Hanafi tradition would be the official religion and required that the king must be a practitioner of the Hanafi faith. Article 5 endorsed Nadir as the king and stated that succession of leadership would be according to his family line. Aside from defining the obligations of the king, it specifically justified Nadir's rule, claiming that he was responsible for achieving independence and the liberation of the people from the civil war. It further stipulated that all future kings must be of Pashtun background and of the Hanafi School of Islamic doctrine. Articles 27 through 70 defined the rights and responsibilities of the National Assembly, consisting of two chambers, a House of Representatives and a House of Elders, or Senate. Requirements for candidacy to the assembly were restrictive with regard to age, years of local residency, and personal codes of conduct. The leadership intended to use the established requirements to prevent political opponents from becoming viable contenders in the parliamentary election. Women were not allowed to cast their votes in the parliamentary election and poor peasants who migrated to another city or town in search of employment could not participate in the election because of strict residency rules. Although the prime minister and the cabinet were regarded to be accountable to the National Assembly, in reality they were only accountable to the king.

As the constitution consolidated all educational institutions under state control, Nadir delegated the task of desecularization of education and supervision of teaching materials to clerics in an attempt to conform school curricula to Islamic teachings. However, this policy did not apply to Nadir's children nor those of his close relatives; they were sent abroad to Western schools. Nadir closed the local schools for girls and recalled all female students currently studying abroad. He reinstated the practice of polygamy, and the Hanafi School of Islamic doctrine became the adjudicator of civil and criminal law. Traditional dress according to Islamic values was reimposed on women, and the production and sale of alcoholic beverages was prohibited, and those who drank alcohol were subject to severe punishment.⁴⁰ The Ministry

of Justice was granted full responsibility to monitor and enforce the laws so that citizens would abide by the prescribed code of conduct. Nadir established the *Jamiat al-Ulama* (Society of Islamic Scholars) and gained the approbation of religious leaders when he removed Amanullah's restrictions on their practices and works. Nadir ordered local printing of copies of the *Quran* in Afghanistan to further enhance his stature as a devout Muslim. All symbols of progress identified with Amanullah were erased, even to the point of renaming the schools named after him to *Estiqlal* (Independence) and *Nijat* (Salvation).

Selected Modernization Programs

One of Nadir's major preoccupations was the building of a strong army that was staunchly loyal to him. To this end he modernized the standing army, which was recruited on the basis of an annual draft and partly on voluntary enlistment, which was for life. The duration of compulsory service was two years in active service and eight years of reserve duty. To train modern officers, selected students were sent to France and Germany, while others received training inside the country. In 1933 he established the *Maktab-e-Ihzariya* (Preparatory School) to train the sons of tribal chiefs to serve as army officers; the number of army troops during this period was estimated to be between forty thousand and seventy thousand men. Another significant project that was intended to ensure sustainability of the state and the ruling class was the building of roads to facilitate trade, and military deployment if people rebelled against the state. Although roads existed that linked Kabul to the east and west, there was no road linking Kabul to the north. Under the supervision of a Hungarian engineer, the state built a road linking Kabul through the Shibar Pass in Bamiyan to Balkh. Thousands of people worked on the project as *corvée* or day laborers. Implementation of the project cost many lives, but the state did not compensate the families for the loss of their male providers. Completion of the road in 1933 enabled the state to maintain tighter control over the northern areas of the country.

To effectively control the country Nadir divided Afghanistan into nine administrative areas that included five major *wilayat* (provinces): Kabul, Qandahar, Herat, Mazar-Qataghan, and Badakhshan and four minor ones, called *hukumat-e-aala*. The provinces and subprovinces were divided into first, second, and third grade, depending on their size and significance. Heads of provinces, subprovinces, and districts were appointed by the central government and were primarily Sunni

Pashtuns and pro-Pashtun Tajiks and others who remained loyal to Nadir. To develop the country's economy, the state adopted a free market economy and encouraged investment by private businessmen and entrepreneurs such as Abdul Majid Zabuli, Shir Khan Nashir, and Aziz, known as Londoni. Aziz is credited with introducing Qaraqul fur to Britain and developing the cotton industry in Qunduz, processing seed pressings, soap, ceramics, and the ginning and pressing of raw cotton. Qunduz was once a malarial swamp area and people could not live there because there was no proper housing and other facilities to make living comfortable. It was a common saying that if "you desire death then go to Qunduz." Economic development transformed Qunduz into a thriving city with new residential housing, schools, and hospitals for the factory workers. In 1930 the government forced well-to-do families to settle in the north, selling state land to them in order to replenish the state treasury.

The state established *Shirkat-e-Sahami-e-Afghan*, a joint stock company, in 1931, and a year later the company was renamed *Bank-e-Milli-e-Afghan* (Afghan National Bank). Zabuli was the founder and director of the bank, and later the bank opened branch offices in several provinces as well as in Peshawar and Quetta in Pakistan, Calcutta and Bombay in India, Berlin, Paris, and London. After a few years the bank monopolized industrial establishments; among the industries the bank controlled were cotton and woolen textiles, ceramics, sugar beets, soap, matches, canning plants, tanneries, and a metal foundry.⁴¹ The financial institution's joint stock companies and subsidiaries controlled about 80 percent of the export-import trade. Although the state established its control over key economic and industrial enterprises, it supported private entrepreneurs and the free market system.

Nadir gave primary importance to the media as a means of manufacturing a new social consciousness so that people would remain loyal to him. He turned his previously underground paper *Islah* into a semiofficial daily. The paper propagated Nadir's cult of personality by highlighting his leadership role in modernizing the country. Nadir made the private daily *Anis* property of the state, supported government papers at the expense of private ones, and published papers in some of the provinces to propagate the official government view. Nadir established *Anjuman-e-Adabi-e-Kabul* (Kabul Literary Association), which published a monthly journal. Papers and periodicals had limited circulation, as the rate of illiteracy was high throughout the country. Other development projects included expansion of postal and telegraph services, building *Dar al-Moalimin*, *Dar al-Olum* (school for Arabic studies), and Kabul University in 1933, with the

opening of a seven-year medical school. Schools were repaired and gradually reopened, and the curriculum, in addition to science and the history of Islam, covered topics that glorified Nadir as a savior of the nation. In schools, Arabic was the language of instruction for religious subjects, Persian was used for classical Islamic education, and Pashtu was used for teaching topics drawn from the Pashtun culture and tradition, dubbed the "national culture." After Nadir consolidated his rule and gained the support of conservative clerics he opened a school for girls and justified it on the grounds that its primary function was to train nurses and midwives.

In the foreign policy arena Nadir strengthened Afghanistan's ties with neighboring countries and major world powers, but his administration maintained its closest working relations with Britain, sought British consultations, and shared intelligence reports with the British. The British also monitored the activities of anti-Nadir figures abroad and reported to Kabul. Nadir declared that his government would honor the treaties Afghanistan had signed with the British. The relationship was the continuation of a relationship that had begun when Nadir lived in British India and sought British support for crossing the frontier area to Afghanistan in 1929 to fight Habibullah. Nadir denied receiving support from the British, and when the issue became public knowledge a number of individuals espousing constitutionalism as a method of governance distanced themselves from him. During his rule Nadir remained loyal to the British and did not support the anti-British movement in the Indian subcontinent as did Amanullah; he even discouraged the leader of the Red Shirt movement, Abdul Ghafar Khan, to cease his anti-British activities. When the Pashtuns engaged in armed confrontation with the British and sent a delegation to Kabul for support, they returned home with no material support except for some neighborly advice. The British described relations with Nadir in these words: "[King Nadir] has honorably lived up to his engagements and shown himself most fair and loyal. Indeed he has kept his firebrands on his side of the border much better than we have ours. It is greatly due to his influence that the Red Shirt Movement has not spread into independent territory to a greater extent than it has."⁴² Nadir also improved Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union, and the two countries signed a nonaggression pact in 1931. Afghanistan imported oil, gasoline, sugar, and other consumer items from the Soviet Union.

Pro-Amanullah supporters, nationalists, and progressive forces opposed Nadir's pro-British policy and continued their struggle for political transformation. In July 1933 Sayed Kamal assassinated

Nadir's brother, Mohammad Aziz, ambassador to Germany. Security forces arrested and executed Kamal on June 14, 1935. Mohammad Azim, a school teacher at Nijat High School in Kabul, stormed into the British mission in Kabul on September 7, 1933, intending to kill the chief of the mission. Unable to reach him, he killed three mission employees. He was arrested, along with a number of his friends, and was executed on September 13, 1933. An anti-Nadir rebellion broke out in Khost in October 1933, but Nadir quickly suppressed it. Political activists finally achieved their goal on November 8, 1933, when they assassinated Nadir during a student award distribution ceremony of Nijat High School. Abdul Khaliq, a young Hazara student at Nijat, shot Nadir to death. As Nadir's body fell to the ground chaos ensued. A number of armed Zazi, Zadran, and Mangal tribesmen threatened to fire on the students and did not allow anyone to leave the palace garden until they identified the person who murdered Nadir. It is said that Khaliq did not want innocent students to suffer and shouted that he was the one who killed Nadir. Khaliq was tortured for his action. Interrogator Sayed Sharif asked Khaliq to indicate the finger he used to pull the trigger and then cut it off with a knife. Then he asked Khaliq which eye he used to target Nadir and gouged out the eye. Finally he had soldiers bayonet Khaliq to death while his father and friends were forced to watch.⁴³ The state also executed Khaliq's father Khudadad, his uncle Mawladad, and his maternal uncle Qurban Ali, as well as Ghulam Rabbani and Ghulam Mustafa, sons of Ghulam Jilani Charkhi, Abdul Latif, Ali Akbar, and Mohammad Ayub. Such a cruel and collective method of torture was intended to teach a lesson to those who might contemplate committing similar acts.

PRIME MINISTER MOHAMMAD HASHIM: RISE OF NARROW PASHTUN NATIONALISM

After Nadir's assassination, his brothers Mohammad Hashim, Shah Mahmood, and Shah Wali supported the ascension to king of Nadir's only son Zahir (born on October 15, 1914) and pledged allegiance to him. They believed that recognizing Zahir as king would be in the best interests of the family, as it would effectively eliminate interfamily disputes that in the past had brought down rival Pashtun leaders who fought each other for the throne. Fazl Omar Mojaddadi, the chief religious leader known as Hazrat-e-Shorbazar, who played a major role in the downfall of Amanullah, was in charge of Zahir's coronation ceremony.⁴⁴ Zahir was young and lacked the necessary skills and experience to run state affairs, and he remained a virtual prisoner under

his uncles; Mohammad Hashim and Shah Mahmood continued their tenures as prime minister and minister of war, respectively, while his other brother Shah Wali served as ambassador to Britain and France (1930–47), and other immediate family members occupied prominent posts in the state apparatus. The uncles provided the young king with a chauffeur-driven black Chevrolet and other indulgences so that he would be tempted to engage in pleasure-seeking hobbies; it is largely for this reason that the king gained a reputation as a playboy who did not pay attention to the daily affairs of the country.

Hashim later mentored Zahir to acquire the skills necessary for a statesman and prepare him for leadership. It is said that on one occasion Hashim made Zahir visit his poultry farm, where he kept a number of ostriches. Prior to visiting the farm, Hashim instructed the caretaker of the farm not to feed the ostriches for a few days. When Hashim and Zahir entered the farm and threw food to the ostriches they came to them for food. Hashim took Zahir for a second tour of the farm and prior to going he instructed the caretaker of the farm to feed the ostriches. When Hashim and Zahir entered the farm and threw food to the ostriches they did not pay any attention and walked away from them because they were not hungry. Hashim told Zahir that if people are well fed they do not pay attention to your leadership and if they are underfed they will obey your leadership and commands without questioning their merits.⁴⁵ Hashim did not realize that people who are deprived of their livelihoods, rights, and liberties ultimately rebel against the established order and take matters into their own hands.

To maintain stability and protect the interests of the ruling family, Hashim dealt severely with progressive and nationalist forces and co-opted conservative religious leaders, feudal landlords, and regressive social forces in the bureaucracy. He imprisoned political opponents and punished others by exiling them to the most remote, backward, inaccessible areas of the country. Since existing prisons could not accommodate more inmates, Hashim seized a number of private inns and converted them into prisons, and built a large prison, Zindane-Dehmazang, in Kabul with rooms resembling medieval dungeons. The maintenance of stability also required the army and the police to be equipped with modern weaponry and riot gear. Hashim built up the standing army so that by 1946 there were ninety thousand men in the army consuming half of the country's revenue. The military establishment remained under the control of the ruling family, which appointed trusted men to senior positions in the army and the police departments. The army was equipped with arms from Britain, Germany, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. Turkish officers remained in

charge of training the army and established military schools in Kabul and some provinces for the purposes of training artillery, cavalry, and infantry officers. By establishing military and police courts the state eliminated control of the religious establishment over the army and the police.

Having achieved stability, Hashim modernized educational institutions to train and cultivate civil service officers who would remain loyal to the regime. The state followed some elements of Western educational systems and recruited teachers from the United States, Britain, and Australia. One of the major objectives of the state was the formulation of a national ideology; as Hashim stated, "We are devoting a sum to public education equal to half our war budget. In this way we are forming the men who tomorrow will have to watch over the independence of their country. We must transform the thoughts of the Afghans before we can build an ultra-Western capital, as Amanullah tried to do so. He saw only the outward forms of Modernization."⁴⁶ As part of this national ideology, Pashtu was declared the official language in Afghanistan in 1936. Hashim said during an interview, "from next year it [Pashtu] is to become the language of our officials, doing away with Persian. Our legends and our poems will then be understood by everyone. We shall draw from them a pride in our culture of the past which will unite us."⁴⁷

The state established the Pashtu Tulana (Pashtu Association) in 1937 in Kabul to conduct research on the Pashtu language, culture, traditions, and way of life. The state intended to use the Pashtu Tulana's research and publications for Pashtunization of every aspect of life in non-Pashtun ethnic communities, to the extent that minority communities had to learn the country's, and even their own, ethnic history through the eyes of the Pashtun ruling class. The state development projects focused exclusively on Pashtun-settled regions in order to make Pashtun development symbols of progress to be emulated by non-Pashtun communities and make their culture and way of life appealing to the people in the non-Pashtun regions. It was during the height of the Pashtunization drive that the names of historical cities, towns, and streets were changed from Persian to Pashtu. The Ministry of Education, under the leadership of Mohammad Naim (1938–46), made the Pashtu language the medium of instruction in schools and printed textbooks in Pashtu, distributing them to schools in regions inhabited by non-Pashtun ethnic communities such as Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Turkmen. The politics of building Pashtun hegemony deprived non-Pashtun ethnic communities of political equality and equal opportunity. For example, Hazaras and Qizilbash students were

not admitted to colleges of law or political science, they could not be employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a few who served as army officers were not promoted beyond the rank of colonel. State repression in Hazarajat caused public resentment, demonstrated in the Hazara rebellion engineered by Hazara tribal chief Yousuf Beg, from Shahristan. Although the government restored order, Yousuf Beg remained defiant and eluded government agencies for years, causing the government to declare him a *yaghi* (bandit). When he was finally captured, Hashim executed him.

To develop the economy, the state established a government-owned bank, Da' Afghanistan Bank, in 1939, to control foreign exchange transactions and currency. Expansion of relations with the international community helped local businessmen, traders, and developers to visit economically advanced countries in the West to explore business and trade opportunities. One of the major policies of economic development involved efforts by the state to bring non-arable lands in the northern areas of the country under cultivation by constructing irrigation canals using *begari*, distributed the land to companies and affluent individuals, and encouraged farmers to cultivate cotton. The state also built industrial complexes for sugar production in Qunduz and textile production in Pol-e-Khumri. The number of private and state-owned economic institutions increased in subsequent years. A number of power plants were built in Kabul, Chaki-Wardak, Qandahar, Herat, and other provinces to provide power for industrial complexes.

AFGHANISTAN AND IMPERIAL POWERS

The post-Amanullah government headed by King Nadir and his successor Zahir strengthened Afghanistan's ties with major imperial powers, including the United States, Germany, and Britain. U.S. entrepreneurs descended upon the country to investigate investment prospects. In November 1936 Kabul granted a seventy-five-year concession to the Inland Exploration Oil Company to explore and develop oil deposits in Afghanistan, and in April 1937 the country's legislative body, the *Shura-e-Milli*, approved the agreement. However, in June 1938 the company discontinued its efforts on the grounds that it was not economically feasible. Germany became a dominant influence in Afghanistan until the outbreak of World War II: "The Germany of the Third Reich was more acceptable than the Weimar Republic because the ruling class considered it as an implacable foe of the Soviets."⁴⁸ Germany provided technical and economic assistance to Afghanistan.

In 1937 Lufthansa Airways began regular weekly flights between Berlin and Kabul. German influence in Afghanistan continued to grow; in 1939 there were between one hundred and three hundred German experts working on different projects such as building roads, exploring mines, and teaching at schools and colleges. In 1939 Afghanistan and Germany concluded an agreement whereby Germany provided almost 80 percent of the materials Afghanistan needed for its economic development and credits for purchasing German machinery for use in textile mills and hydroelectric plants. The loans were to be repaid with Afghanistan's cotton over a ten-year period.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Germany worked to reduce British influence in the tribal areas bordering British India. The Germans exploited an incident in the area in January 1939 to their advantage when a Syrian cleric, Al-Kalani, known as Pir-e-Shami, denounced King Zahir as an illegal leader of Afghanistan and declared support for Amanullah, regarding him to be the legitimate king. This caused several tribes of the Waziri and Sulimankhil to rebel, attacking government installations in Khost, but the government effectively put down the resistance. Germany was not happy with British and Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and worked to secure Kabul's cooperation in order to create a solid pro-German base in Afghanistan. From 1939 to 1941 Germany strove to gain the support of disaffected pro-Amanullah groups, promising to provide them assistance to seize power and restore Amanullah to the throne. To this end the German intelligence agency devised "The Amanullah Project." A branch of the Nazi party in charge of the foreign office opposed the plan and instead recommended building a mutually advantageous working relationship with the leadership in Afghanistan so that Kabul could join Germany in the war against the Allies. The Germans were of the opinion that they needed to "create a danger to the frontiers of British India, using Afghanistan as a base. The Germans wanted to secure the aid of the USSR for their Afghanistan division. Brauchitsch, commander-in-chief of Germany's land forces, told Halder on January 1940, that the Reich was interested in directing Soviet expansion to the Bosphorus, Afghanistan, and India which would assure the peace in the Balkans which was so necessary for the Germans."⁴⁹ Another proposal was developed to send equipment to Afghanistan through Iraq or Iran. The Germans approached Zabuli, a well-known businessman, who visited Berlin and initially agreed to support the Germans and organize anti-British uprisings in the tribal areas. Zabuli invited Faiz Mohammad, Afghanistan's ambassador, to Budapest for

a meeting regarding this issue and they informed Kabul about the German shipments of arms to Afghanistan.⁵⁰

The Soviet Union and Britain remained suspicious of the Afghan-German relationship and the presence of a large number of German technical experts in Afghanistan. When the British asked the leadership to declare Afghanistan's position regarding the war, Kabul feared that involvement in the war might endanger the continuation of their leadership and declared Afghanistan's neutrality in the war. The British then pressed the leadership to expel German nationals and experts from Afghanistan and the leadership in Kabul had no option but to comply with the British demand. German leader Adolph Hitler reacted by sending an official letter to ex-king Amanullah in 1945, encouraging him to return to the northern areas of Afghanistan and promising that Germany would provide him with military assistance. It is reported that Amanullah responded that he did not intend to seize power if such authority was given to him by an alien power, as it would undermine his personal integrity and that of his nation.⁵¹ With Germany's defeat at the end of the war, its role as a major influence in Afghanistan came to an end.

The ruling class also tried to distance Afghanistan from the Soviet Union, fearing that the Soviet influence on liberal and democratic forces would be a major threat to the *status quo*. Afghanistan relied on the British for support, as before, and took steps to strengthen the country's relationship with the United States. The United States established its mission in Kabul on June 6, 1942, and in the immediate postwar years increased its participation in Afghanistan's development and provided economic assistance to finance the country's agricultural projects.

Opposition to Hashim's dictatorial style of leadership grew within and outside the ruling elite and caused him to resign in 1946. The king's uncle, Shah Mahmood, became prime minister, and it is suggested that Hashim was not happy with this development and expressed his anger when he confronted Zahir, telling him that it was Hashim who installed him to the throne. Zahir responded that if it were not for the fear of revenge, Hashim would not have proclaimed him king.⁵² As relations remained sour between Hashim and Zahir, the former nurtured his nephew Mohammad Daoud, considering him to be resolute and firm compared to the lame-duck king. He had hope that Daoud would master the art of statecraft, gain experience in daily administrative affairs and international politics, and seize power and lead the country in the near future.

CHAPTER 2



DAWN OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION

MODERNIZATION IN THE ERA OF SUPERPOWER RIVALRY

The post–World War II era necessitated political changes in the international arena and also impacted political development in Afghanistan. Middle-class intellectuals were agitating for societal justice, freedom of association, and improved opportunities for lower-income social groups. People did not believe that Hashim, who single-handedly ruled the country for seventeen years as a royal dictator, would step down, but they welcomed his resignation anyway, naively believing that a new chapter had opened in their lives. The ruling family also welcomed Hashim’s resignation, as his authoritarian style of leadership created a distance between the ruling family and the public. A new leader was needed in order to reduce the possibility of public revolt against the monarchy. The ruling family considered King Zahir’s uncle, Shah Mahmood, to be an ideal person for the job and appointed him prime minister.

Shah Mahmood was born in 1886 in British India. He joined the army and became commander in chief during the reign of his brother Hashim (1929–46). He declared a number of cosmetic reforms in the social, political, and economic arenas with the hope that people would forget past political repressions and be grateful to him for granting civil liberties, however, he made sure that the army remained under the control of the ruling family. He appointed his nephew Mohammad Daoud as minister of war, put trusted aides in charge of the security forces, and embarked upon his main objective of repairing the damage done to the monarchy by his predecessor. Shah Mahmood adopted liberal policies intended to project a benign image of the monarchy and garner public support for the regime. However, the policies he

pursued benefited only a small number of educated people in middle- and upper-class families and did not end the suffering of the vast majority of the dispossessed, as they continued to labor from dawn to dusk to feed their families. Shah Mahmood freed political prisoners and appointed some of them to prominent posts in the government, but these individuals were not involved in the day-to-day decision making. To demonstrate that he was genuinely committed to democratic reforms, Shah Mahmood even went so far as to allow students to stage a satiric show critical of his brother's ostrich farm, where he used the ostriches to teach the arts of statecraft to the young king. Student activists who took part in the theatrical show included Eshaq Osman, Kabir Seraj, Mohammad Shoaib, Abdul Basir Hakimi, Haidar Dawar, Mohammad Yunus Sorkhabi, Nimatullah, and others.¹

The cosmetic reforms from the top led to the formation of a political organization, the *Wishzalmayan* (Awakened Youth), in 1947, headed by Mohammad Rasoul, a Pashtun nationalist and landowner from Qandahar. Members of the organization came from various social backgrounds (petty bourgeoisie, civil service personnel, clerics, etc.), and prominent among them were Abdurrauf Benawa, Abdul Hay Habibi, Abdul Hay Aziz, Noor Mohammad Taraki, Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghubar, Faiz Mohammad Angar, Shams al-Din Majrooh, and Gul Pacha Ulfat. The organization held regular meetings and advocated constitutional monarchy, free and democratic elections, and civil liberties, and its members were active in Kabul, Qandahar, Jalalabad, and Farah provinces. A year later the organization split because of differences on the issue of Pashtun nationalism, as the hardliners supported the Red Shirt movement, headed by Abdul Ghafar Khan, agitating for autonomy for the Pashtuns in Pakistan's Pashtun tribal region. This caused individuals such as Ghubar, Dr. Abd al-Rahman Mahmoodi, and Mohammad Siddiq Farhang to leave the organization, criticizing its progovernment position and narrow Pashtun nationalism.

Shah Mahmood's liberal policies paved the way for mayoral and parliamentary elections in 1948. Members of the *Wishzalmayan* contested the elections, and several of them were elected by popular vote, including Gul Pacha Ulfat from Jalalabad, Salahuddin Seljuqi from Herat, Abdul Hay Habibi from Qandahar, and Khal Mohammad Khastah from Balkh, as well as individuals such as Mahmoodi, Ghubar, and others who split from the organization. Elections of progressive and radical individuals to the National Assembly worried the government of Shah Mahmood, and he worked to ensure that the assembly remained under his government's influence. Abdul Hadi

Dawi, who had family ties to the ruling family and was a trusted aide to King Zahir, was elected as a deputy from Kabul and contested the elections for the speaker of the assembly. The government encouraged another person to become a candidate for the post who had no support among the representatives and Dawi became speaker of the assembly. Progressive and liberal deputies were a minority in the assembly and could not influence the outcome of the election to the assembly's administrative posts.

Progressive and radical representatives used the assembly as a forum to express democratic ideas, defend the rights of their constituencies, and supervise the affairs of the state. Among the representatives, Dr. Mahmoodi (he was born in Kabul and had a medical degree) was well known for his opposition to the entrenched power structure and support for the poor and voiceless segment of society, factors that helped him gain support among the radicals, nationalists, and poor. His stern objections to the decision to approve a huge budget allocated for the Ministry of Royal Court made him an icon who opposed tyrant rulers. Major achievements of the assembly included the transparency of state budget and expenditures, abolishment of forced labor and illegal taxes, monitoring and supervising of government activities, and the endorsement of the Press Law in 1950, which led to publication of a number of independent papers: *Angar* (Ember), edited by Faiz Mohammad Angar; *Nida-e-Khalq* (Voice of the People), edited by Mahmoodi; *Watan* (Homeland) edited by Ghubar; and *Wulus* (People), edited by Gul Pacha Ulfat. In an editorial, the *Nida-e-Khalq* supported adherence to the principles of democracy, the people's rights, and equality; it denounced despotism, tyranny, and exploitation of the poor, and set its task as educating the masses to show them the way to achieve a government by the people and for the people. The paper condemned the monopoly of economic power by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and stated that "one of the causes of the people's impoverishment is the fact that money and land are being concentrated in the hands of a limited number of people, that is, becoming their private monopoly."² Another major political achievement was the formation of a students' union at Kabul University in 1950 that mobilized to fight for social and political change.

Individuals affiliated with the private papers later formed political organizations. For example, in early 1951 people associated with *Nida-e-Khalq* formed a political organization called *Khalq* (Masses), headed by Mahmoodi, with *Nida-e-Khalq* as its organ of publication (the paper was published between April and July 1951). Members of the organization included individuals such as Mohammad Naim

Shayan, Nasrullah Yousufi, Dr. Abdul Rahim Mahmoodi, Mohammad Azim Mahmoodi, Mohammad Aman Mahmoodi, and a few others. The organization advocated democracy, societal justice, fighting exploitation, and democratic rights and civil liberties. It advocated free parliamentary elections, freedom of expression and association, and equilibrium among the three branches of the government—the legislative, executive, and judiciary. It opposed the monopoly of power by a handful of people and articulated the need for broader public participation in the government. The organization was unable to establish links with the people and its activities were confined primarily to political agitation among students and glitterati. Efforts to elevate it to the level of a party failed and it was dissolved in 1952. *Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party) was formed by Ghubar and his associates in January 1951. They advocated democracy, socioeconomic reforms, development of education, health care, and expanded participation of the people in the state apparatus, as well as support for national liberation struggles in the international arena, such as nationalization of the Suez Canal and the oil industry in Iran. Party members came from various social backgrounds, including people with close ties to the ruling family such as Abdul Hay Aziz, Abdul Qayum Rasoul, and Sultan Ahmad Loynab. Other well-known members were Mohammad Siddiq Farhang, Barat Ali Taj, Sarwar Joya, Noor al-Haq, and General Mohammad Fateh. A political organization that advocated Pan-Turkish politics was formed in the northern region of the country, but it failed to gain public recognition because of its narrow political focus, and its activities remained underground.

Although Shah Mahmood's policies were intended to broaden the social base of the monarchy, the opposition continued to press his government for wider sociopolitical reforms. Dismayed with radicals, liberals, and progressive deputies at the assembly for their critical views of his government, Shah Mahmood decided to prevent reelection of these people and intervened in the eighth parliamentary elections held in 1952. As a result of government interference and vote rigging, representatives such as Mahmoodi, Ghubar, and others were not elected. They accused the government of falsifying the election results and staged a demonstration condemning state interference in the elections. The state used force to disperse the demonstrators and the next day it arrested and imprisoned leading personalities such as Ghubar, Mahmoodi, Barat Ali Taj, and others. Ghubar was sentenced to four years in jail; the party he founded, *Hizb-e-Watan*, was dissolved after he was freed from prison in 1956. Mahmoodi was sentenced to nine years in jail and it has been suggested that he was poisoned in jail; he

died a few days after he was freed in 1962 at the age of fifty-four. Taj died in 1963 in Behsud, Wardak Province, during an official government trip to Hazarajat, and Abdurrauf Benawa settled in India. Abdul Hay Habibi fled the country and settled in Pakistan, where he published the journal *Afghanistan-e-Azad*, which criticized the ruling family.

In the educational arena, reforms were introduced to improve the deteriorating quality of education. During Mohammad Hashim's rule the Pashtu language was made the medium of instruction in schools, but this reform failed as non-Pashtu-speaking students had difficulty learning subjects taught in Pashtu. Shah Mahmood had no choice but to reintroduce the Persian language as the medium of instruction in Persian-speaking communities, while Pashtu remained the medium of instruction in Pashtun-settled regions. Shah Mahmood's achievements in the educational sector included building a number of elementary, secondary and high schools. He named one of the high schools in Kabul after a well-known Pashtun leader of the tribal area of Pakistan, Khush-hal Khan Khattak; another school was named after the country's well-known philosopher Abu Ali Cina (Avecinna). He also established the College of Literature and a vocational school for women. The College of Islamic Law was established in 1951 and recruited teachers who graduated from a private *madrassa*; they taught until a number of college graduates returned home and replaced them after completing their educations in Egypt. The state also established Afghanistan's Institute of Technology (AIT) and in 1952 established the Education Press for printing textbooks.

Shah Mahmood initiated a large-scale agricultural project that included the building of a dam to bring uncultivated land under irrigation in Helmand Province and the distribution of the land to landless peasants. This action was meant to quell any threat of peasant uprising by improving their impoverished living conditions. From 1946 to 1959 the U.S.-based Morrison-Knudsen Company (MKC) undertook the construction of the Arghandab-Kajaki dam, with networks of canals to provide water to the fields in Helmand. The dam was 145 feet high, 1,740 feet long, and had a storage capacity of 157,085.02 hectare-feet of water. The Nadi Ali district in Lashkargah, Helmand, was selected as the first site for the farming experiment. The project drained the country's currency resources and forced the government to borrow from the United States (\$21 million in 1951 and \$18 million in 1953). When the project was completed, the total cost was estimated to be around \$100 million, about 40 percent of the country's annual budget. After completion of the project the government

of Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud (1953–63) helped settle 3,000 families of several Pashtun tribes, 1,200 *Kochis* (Pashtun nomads), as well as some non-Pashtun ethnic families of Uzbeks, Farsiwans, Hazaras, Arabs, and Bokharis in the Nadi Ali district. About six hundred families were settled at a second experimental farming site in Marja and a few families were settled in Shamalan and Darwishan south of Helmand. These families were granted land on the condition that they pay the balance of 16,800 Afghanis, or \$320 (\$1.00 is equal to fifty Afghanis), to the state over a twenty-year period and upon payment of the debt the title to the land would revert to them.³

The government failed to consider the ethnocentric implications of forced resettlement of people into a different ethnic environment, and this contributed to the eventual failure of the project. Problems began to arise soon after the people settled there, as different ethnic groups refused to assimilate and antagonism over water rights soured relations between the old settlers and the new ones. The Uzbeks left the area and later many others abandoned their land so that by 1965 there were only 1,118 Pashtun families who remained on their land. A significant contributing factor was an inadequate land survey, which failed to reveal a substratum of impenetrable boulder groupings a few inches below the soil surface. This situation exacerbated topsoil erosion as well as salt buildup in the remaining soil. Families were allotted plots that were too small to adequately support their crops and their homes were located far from the fields, up to four kilometers distance. After the project collapsed, the state settled the remaining landless Pashtun peasants in the northern part of the country among the Uzbeks, Turkmen, and Tajiks. It is because of government resettlement policies like these throughout Afghanistan's history that Pashtun tribes are widely settled in the north despite the lack of any natural historical ties with the indigenous tribes there.⁴

Despite projecting himself as a liberal leader, Shah Mahmood did not support the rights of other national minorities for social justice and political equality, although he ardently supported the rights of the Pashtuns for self-determination in Pakistan. The Shia Hazaras were treated as second-class citizens. The *Kochis* often intruded into their land with tacit government support; this caused Hazara tribal chiefs to rebel against the government. In Shahristan, a well-known tribal leader Mohammad Ibrahim, known as *Gaw Sawar* (Cowboy) rebelled against repressive state policies that forced people to pay various types of taxes, killed several government officials, and seized control of Shahristan during the winter in 1946. To reestablish government control the state sent influential Hazara tribal chiefs to negotiate and

convince Ibrahim to surrender. Ibrahim agreed to surrender on the condition that the government would accept some of his demands and ensure his safety. In 1947 King Zahir and Shah Mahmood met with him and kept him under house arrest in Kabul; later he was allowed to return to Shahrستان. When tensions again mounted in Shahrستان, the government deployed forces there, captured Ibrahim, and exiled him and his family to the north in Pol-e-Khumri. A few years later they allowed him to return to Kabul. Ibrahim lacked political vision and his reaction to state repression of his people was limited to rebellion.

Although Ibrahim enhanced his stature within the community, political repression of Hazarajat continued as before and the *Kochis* continued to violate their property. Whenever there were confrontations between the Hazaras and the *Kochis*, government officials, who were mainly Pashtun or Pashtunized, generally demonstrated a biased support of the *Kochis*. For example, during a confrontation between Hazaras and *Kochis* a Hazara man was killed and the foot of a camel belonging to a *Kochi* man sustained minor bruises. When the case was referred to a court in Kabul, the justice official rendered a verdict that awarded 600 afghani compensation to a surviving relative of the Hazara that was killed while the *Kochi* was given 3,700 afghani in compensation for the injuries sustained by his camel.⁵

In the foreign policy arena, Shah Mahmood strengthened the country's ties with the United States after World War II. The United States recognized Afghanistan in 1936 and appointed William H. Hornibrook, its ambassador in Iran (1935–36), as a nonresident ambassador until it established a diplomatic mission in Kabul in 1942. Cornelius Van H. Engert served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 1942 to 1945. The United States upgraded its mission to an embassy on June 5, 1948, and Ely E. Palmer served as ambassador from 1945 to 1948. In 1944, while Shah Mahmood was minister of war, he solicited U.S. military assistance to modernize the army, but the United States refused Afghanistan's request because U.S. leaders maintained that the Soviet Union was satisfied with Afghanistan being a buffer state and would not develop an aggressive policy toward it. Shah Mahmood requested aid from the United States again a few years later and was rebuffed. The U.S. leadership did not want to provoke the Soviets into invading. They wanted to secure regional cooperation between Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and India, but cooperation among these countries at the time was considered highly unlikely. In addition, Afghanistan's present government had managed to be relatively stable for seventeen years, and the United States did not see any critical need to provide assistance beyond small loans for

development purposes or assistance in buying military equipment for defensive purposes. The U.S. leadership noted the country's problems with inflation and widespread poverty, but did not view it as sufficient to destabilize the country's infrastructure. The United States was also disinclined to divert their resources away from their first priority of defense at the time, namely western Europe.

Shah Mahmood strengthened the country's ties with Britain and welcomed Britain's participation in Afghanistan's development. In 1944 British teachers were hired to teach at the Ghazi High School in Kabul and British individuals worked at Radio Afghanistan as well as in the textile industry. Shah Mahmood's efforts to win international support finally paid off when, on November 9, 1946, Afghanistan became a member of the United Nations (UN). Afghanistan's relationship with the Soviet Union had stagnated since the downfall of Amanullah in 1929, as Kabul was not pleased with its support to individuals favoring the return of Amanullah to the throne. However, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on border issues in 1946 and a year later signed a protocol on exchange of communications between the two countries followed by expansion of trade and commerce. On January 13, 1950, Shah Mahmood's government extended official recognition to the Peoples' Republic of China and permitted emigration of Afghan Jews to Israel.

Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan remained sour over the issue of Pashtunistan, after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. What prompted Kabul to advance territorial claims and support to the right to self-determination for Pashtuns and Baluchis residing on the other side of the Durand Line after the division of the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India is not that Kabul leaders cared about the right of self-determination and the welfare of these people, but rather it was their ulterior motive to gain access to the Arabian Sea to facilitate trade. The leadership in Kabul toyed with the idea of having access to the sea as early as the summer of 1940, after Sir William Barton, who lived nearly twenty years in the frontier area, made a remark suggesting that Afghanistan should have a seaport: "The country is landlocked, as foreign trade, except on the Russian side, has to move nearly 1500 miles to the sea across India, in such conditions rapid expansion is impossible. The obvious remedy is a port and an approach corridor on the Arabian Sea. To have such a port is an ambition of the Afghan government. Why does not Britain offer the concession?"⁶

The British government did not support his suggestion because it would unite the Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line. Afghanistan continued its rhetoric supporting the right of the Pashtuns of

Pakistan to self-determination. Former prime minister Mohammad Hashim candidly expressed his views on the subject and having access to the sea during an interview in Bombay, India: "If an independent Pashtunistan cannot be set up, the frontier province should join Afghanistan. Our neighbor Pakistan will realize that our country, with its population and trade, needs an outlet to the sea, which is very essential . . . if the nations of the world desire peace and justice . . . it will be easy for us to get an outlet to the sea."⁷

Despite its political rhetoric, the Kabul leadership had no option but to recognize Pakistan's independence, and the two countries exchanged ambassadors in February 1948 and agreed that a referendum must be conducted so that the Pashtuns could decide their future. To the chagrin of Kabul leaders, a referendum was held that supported Pakistan's position, and since then Kabul has continued to express hostility toward Pakistan. For example, Kabul designated the ninth day of the sixth month of Sunbulah in Afghanistan's calendar as Pashtunistan Day, celebrated annually, and named a square in Kabul adjacent to the palace Pashtunistan Square. The state established the Department of Tribes in Kabul, with branch offices in provinces that provided guesthouses that catered to the needs of the Pashtun activists of Pakistan who came to Afghanistan to carry out political activities. It allocated huge sums of money for this purpose, which enabled Pashtun dignitaries from Pakistan to enjoy their stay while receiving annuities from Kabul without having to seriously work to fight for the cause of Pashtunistan; some even received financial support from Pakistan. Pakistan resented Kabul's leaders for their support of the Pashtun dissidents and tribal chiefs and in 1948 it arrested Pashtun tribal leader Abdul Ghafar Khan and bombed a Pashtun *Jirgah*, claiming the lives of several people. Afghanistan condemned this action by Pakistan and relations were further strained between the two countries. Kabul broadcast news in the Pashtu language in support of the Pashtun struggle for autonomy and voted against Pakistan's admission to the UN.

In July 1949 the leadership in Kabul convened a *Loya Jirgah* that rejected the validity of the Durand Line on the grounds that the British forced Afghanistan to sign the treaty and Afghanistan had not signed such a treaty with Pakistan. Pakistan retaliated by establishing a Radio Free Afghanistan in Quetta in 1949, inciting national minority communities to fight for their rights. The murder of Pakistan Prime Minister Liyaqat Ali in October 1951 by a Pashtun from Afghanistan further deteriorated Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, although Kabul denied any involvement in the incident.⁸

The Kabul leadership's primary concern was to maintain political stability at home and they used the issue of Pashtunistan as a convenient domestic ploy to divert public opinion from growing disenchantment with the monarchy and struggle for political transformation. To this end they arrested political opponents on charges of treason and collaboration with Pakistan. Mohammad Daoud, minister of defense (1946–48), and his brother Mohammad Naim were not happy with their uncle's domestic and foreign policies, and this caused Shah Mahmood to send them to diplomatic posts in London and Paris, respectively, in 1948. Daoud returned a year later with the intention of strengthening his ties with like-minded persons and forcing Shah Mahmood to resign so he could seize power. Daoud perceived Shah Mahmood's liberal policies as a threat to stability and convinced members of the ruling family, including King Zahir, to dismiss Shah Mahmood and appoint him prime minister. Daoud also established a semi-independent organization in January 1950, *Itihad-iya-e-Azadi-e-Pashtunistan* (Union for Freedom of Pashtunistan), headed by Ghulam Haidar Adalat and financed by wealthy businessman and Minister of Economics Abdul Majid Zabuli.⁹ When the organization failed to gain the support of the intelligentsia, representatives at the National Assembly, or bureaucratic officials it was renamed *Club-e-Milli* (National Club), with the hope that the new name would appeal to nationalists and secure more members. The club used one of the buildings belonging to former minister of the interior Ghulam Farooq Osman as its party headquarters; for this reason it became known as the royal club. The club maintained that by winning the support of bureaucratic officials and some elected representatives, it could neutralize the influence of radical representatives at the assembly and other independent social and political groups. Although the club did not have a progressive platform to appeal to a broad section of the people and was dissolved in 1953, it succeeded in weakening Shah Mahmood, forcing him to resign and facilitating Daoud's rise to power as prime minister.

Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud: A Decade of Statism

Growing opposition within the ruling family forced Shah Mahmood to resign. His decision was announced via Kabul Radio in early September 1953. He cited poor health as his reason for resigning, and King Zahir appointed Daoud as prime minister. Daoud was a dictator who did not approve of Western liberal politics or the cosmetic reforms his predecessor had initiated. Daoud did not view the Soviet

Union as a threat to his more repressive administration because its leader, Nikita S. Khrushchev, was interested in building and expanding alliances with peripheral states against the West; to him the foreign policies of peripheral states were more important than their political ideologies. Daoud was impressed by the Soviet Union's authoritarian style of governance and economic policies; he believed that such a system of governance and economic development had much in common with his own policies—ruling the country with an iron hand and dictating strategies of economic development. Daoud formed a cabinet composed of trusted aides: his brother Mohammad Naim as foreign minister, Mohammad Arif as minister of national defense, Abul Malik Rahimzai as minister for finance and economy, and other individuals who had good working relations with him.

Daoud did not agree with the economic policies of his predecessor and embarked on large-scale statism (state-guided economic development) as an alternative development strategy. He launched the first five-year plan, from March 1956 to September 1961, that relied heavily on foreign aid and technical assistance for its implementation. Differences of opinion emerged between Daoud and Rahimzai regarding the funding required for financing development projects. Rahimzai proposed that the government investigate former prime minister Hashim's overseas investments, repatriate his assets, and use them to finance the country's development projects. Hashim died on October 26, 1953, and did not have any children to inherit his property; his nephew Daoud opposed the proposition, as he was to inherit half of the assets and his brother Naim the other half. Rahimzai resigned in July 1957 and was imprisoned on allegations of incompetence, corruption, and planning a coup against the regime. Rahimzai remained in jail during Daoud's premiership and his presidency from 1973 to 1978. Through mediation by Amnesty International, he was released from prison after the pro-Soviets seized power in April 1978.¹⁰

State economic policy during the first and second five-year plans emphasized the development of raw materials that capital lenders needed but did not stress the development of those sectors of the economy that would meet domestic needs. For example, no priority was given to wheat, which was a staple of the Afghan diet. Instead, priority was given to cotton plantations for export to international markets, primarily the Soviet Union. Although state economic development strategies led to a semimodernization of agriculture in some parts of the country, it also resulted in commercialization of agriculture and contributed to rapid proletarianization of the peasantry and the concentration of land to the state and the propertied classes.

Dispossessed farmers and peasants had to work as sharecroppers or wage laborers. Economic development policies not only tied the country's economy to that of the Soviet Union but also provided a market for Soviet commodities such as chemical fertilizers and Soviet-made Byelarus tractors.¹¹ Afghanistan's economic dependence on the Soviet Union compelled them to buy Soviet-manufactured goods, employ hundreds of Soviet technicians in Soviet-sponsored development projects, and export locally produced goods to the Soviet Union.

In the political arena, Daoud eliminated civil liberties, freedom of association, and freedom of speech. During his tenure, political parties were not allowed to engage in politics and the state controlled the press and all forms of mass communication. Foreign journals were thoroughly censored and some were banned from importation into the country. Daoud not only turned against radical intellectuals but also disapproved of the policies of proestablishment reformists and imprisoned religious and political leaders whom he considered a threat to stability. Sebghatullah Mojaddadi, a well-known religious figure, was arrested and imprisoned for four and a half years on charges that he intended to disrupt the visit of Soviet leader Khrushchev in March 1960.¹² Daoud rewarded those who supported him, and even sent some of them to study in institutions of higher education abroad and cultivated closer ties with pro-Soviet individuals such as Babrak Karmal, Samad Azhar, Mir Akbar Khayber, Bariq Shafiyi, and Sulaiman Layiq (Layiq's given name was Ghulam Mojaddad—when he was introduced to Daoud in a meeting Daoud named him Layiq).¹³

Daoud took a personal interest in the Pashtunistan issue and naively believed that all Pashtuns residing in Pakistan supported the movement for autonomy, when in fact only a small number of dissident Pashtuns believed in the notion of an independent Pashtunistan. Daoud's support for rights to self-determination for Pashtuns and Baluchis soured relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan to the point of open hostilities and mobilization of their armed forces for a possible confrontation. In 1955 Kabul organized a protest demonstration in front of the Pakistan Embassy; the demonstrators entered the embassy building and brought down its flag and desecrated it. Similar demonstrations were organized in front of Pakistan consulates in Jalalabad and Qandahar. Pakistan retaliated in kind and Pakistanis attacked the Afghanistan consulate in Peshawar. When the leadership in Pakistan harassed the Pashtuns and Baluchis agitating for self-determination, a number of dissident Pashtuns and Baluchis sought refuge in Afghanistan. Daoud supported the dissidents and used them as propaganda tools against Pakistan; he granted scholarships to students in

the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan to study in schools in Afghanistan and even sent some of them to the West to continue their education.

Pakistan proposed formation of a confederation with Afghanistan—a move intended to end Kabul's concern over having no access to the sea and to end their support of autonomy for the Pashtuns and Baluchis residing in Pakistan. Pakistan's ambassador in Kabul did his best to earn the trust of the leadership in Kabul, and Pakistan's leader, Iskander Mirza, visited Kabul in August 1956.

[He] flew into Kabul . . . to a royal reception at the airport. The King, along with his entire Cabinet, were present to receive him. For the visiting President, the king vacated his small palace where he himself lived inside the royal castle. The rest of the entourage were accommodated in the State Guest Houses . . . It was at the house of Shah Mahmood, an uncle of the king who had hosted a quiet lunch, that he suggested a Pakistan-Afghanistan Confederation . . . The initial blueprint suggested that both sides would maintain their internal autonomy, but in the matter of defense, foreign policy, foreign trade and communication, there would be a central government. The prime minister would be by rotation. The question of the head of state was left open till our ambassador had talked to the prime minister. By then, Malik Feroz Khan Noon had taken over. He said there was no difficulty in accepting King Zahir Shah as the constitutional head of state . . . President Mirza also concurred . . . So everything was moving towards the cherished goal of confederation.¹⁴

The idea of a confederation was sabotaged after Mirza was overthrown and General Mohammad Ayub Khan seized power in 1958. Ayub Khan was a Pashtun. He regarded himself as the leader of the Pashtuns in Pakistan, and believed that the Pashtuns in Afghanistan should join Pakistan under his leadership. Daoud also regarded himself as a leader of the Pashtun tribal communities and could not reconcile with Ayub Khan's views—a factor that soured Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. When another attempt was made to revive the proposed Afghanistan-Pakistan confederation in the mid-1970s, Pakistan leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto rejected the proposition, arguing that a confederation with an economically underdeveloped Afghanistan would not benefit Pakistan. He stated, "Why confederate with a backward country like Afghanistan? Why not confederate with India."¹⁵ With the failure of the confederation effort, relations between the two countries remained hostile. Like his predecessor, Daoud used the Pashtunistan issue as an excuse to suppress civil and political liberties at home; he

arrested those who did not agree with his domestic and foreign policies, accusing them of being Pakistani informants, saboteurs, or spies.

The Soviet Union's support of Afghanistan's policy on the right to self-determination for Pashtuns caused Daoud to strengthen ties with Moscow. To avoid criticism by his opponents Daoud portrayed himself as an independent leader and Afghanistan as a nonaligned nation. To demonstrate that he had good relations with both superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—he sponsored a Soviet and a U.S. soldier who jointly participated in a military parade during an anniversary celebration of the country's independence in 1959.¹⁶ Daoud was interested in acquiring arms and economic assistance from any willing country in order to consolidate his power. He requested military assistance from the United States to help modernize the standing army and sent his brother Naim to Washington on October 8, 1954, to appeal directly to John Foster Dulles. On December 28, 1954, the United States said it would not provide military assistance to the country on the grounds that “after careful consideration, extending military aid to Afghanistan will create problems not offset by the strength it will generate. Instead of asking for arms, Afghanistan should settle the Pashtunistan dispute with Pakistan.”¹⁷ The United States sided with Pakistan over the issue of Pashtunistan and recognized the Durand Line as the legal boundary separating Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan was a member of the U.S.-sponsored Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact, later renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and with this membership came military assistance from the United States.

Kabul viewed U.S. military support of Pakistan as a threat to Afghanistan's stability and requested an equivalent amount of military aid from the United States. The United States again declined, causing Daoud to forge closer ties with the Soviet Union. On March 13, 1955, at an emergency session of the *Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of Tribal Leaders), the decision was made to ask the Soviet Union for military assistance. At the same time the *Jirgah* decided to terminate U.S. development projects in Afghanistan and award them to East European countries.¹⁸ Soviet leaders visited Afghanistan in December 1955 and pledged economic and military assistance that included eleven MiG-15 fighters, one TL-15 cargo plane, two MI-4 helicopters, as well as mobile radio units and small arms. Afghanistan's army grew to 100,000 men and the air force to 10,000, bolstered by an estimated \$600 million in military assistance.¹⁹ Soviet technicians were sent to Afghanistan to train army officers, and between 1955 and

1979 about 3,725 students and military personnel received advanced military training in the Soviet Union.²⁰

Afghanistan's reliance on the Soviet Union and its bloc countries and its hostility toward Pakistan caused the United States to remain engaged in Afghanistan not only to help Afghanistan improve relations with Pakistan but also to reduce the Soviet presence in the country and impede Soviet expansion toward the Indian Ocean. When Daoud visited the United States in 1958 he again stressed Afghanistan's desire to support the right to self-determination for the Pashuns and Baluchis of Pakistan. Daoud failed to gain U.S. support, as the United States was committed to support Pakistan on the issue of Pashtunistan, however, the United States promised to provide economic aid for the country's modernization programs.

Between 1961 and 1963 relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorated. On August 22, 1961, Pakistan closed its consulates in Jalalabad and Qandahar and asked Kabul to close its consulates in Peshawar and Quetta and its trade agencies in Parachinar and Chaman, accusing the agencies of engagement in subversive anti-Pakistan activities. On September 6 the two countries terminated relations and closed their embassies in Kabul and Karachi. Their borders remained closed and goods bound for Afghanistan were stranded in Karachi. Daoud requested the United States help Afghanistan move its imported goods through Chahbahar, Iran, but the United States declined. The Soviet Union offered assistance and airlifted the country's imported goods from the port of Karachi. This caused Daoud to further strengthen ties with the Soviet Union. In October Afghanistan's National Assembly endorsed Soviet economic and technical assistance. The United States was disturbed by the closer relationship developing between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, using economic aid and loans to make its presence felt in Afghanistan. It tried to reduce the dependence of Afghanistan's army on the Soviets by providing a small amount of military aid as well as scholarships for a limited number of military officers to study in the United States. Between 1958 and 1979 approximately fifteen to twenty military officers received advanced military training at military academies in the United States.²¹

King Zahir was not interested in running the day-to-day affairs of the country, preferring to indulge in bacchanalian hobbies that included regular visits to his resorts in Kariz-e-Mir, Paghman, and Saighan-Kahmard, hunting in the Pamir Mountains, and vacationing in Europe. Daoud ruled the country with an iron fist and became known as *Sardar-e-diwana* (lunatic prince), as he was not accountable

to anyone. Most of his advisors and staff did not dare challenge his views and were forced to agree with him and provide him with biased information to please him. Tribalism and regionalism constituted the cornerstones of his domestic policies. Although pro-Soviet supporters regarded Daoud as a “red prince,” Daoud neither believed in socialism nor did he cherish the principles of social democratic ideals. He was a dictator fascinated by the Nazi ideology that stressed the blind obedience of citizens and the superiority of the Aryan race. Daoud also believed in such a method of governance—complete obedience of citizens and Pashtun domination of the country’s politics.

Daoud’s efforts building Pashtun hegemony led to the publication of literature that promoted the Pashtu language as the national language, and concerted efforts were made to prove its superiority over other languages. *Patakhazana* (Hidden Treasure) by Abdul Hay Habibi in 1960, which chronicles the history of Pashtu literature, is an example of literature that was intended to establish the precedence and superiority of the Pashtu language over the Persian language. It was during this rising tide of Pashtun nationalism that King Zahir nicknamed one of his sons, Mohammad Daoud, Pashtunyar (Friend of the Pashtun). While Daoud professed support for Pashtun nationalism, most Pashtuns suffered during his tenure. The *Kochi*, a nomadic people, were bereft of basic social services and their children could not receive an education. In particular, the *Kochi* migration to Hazarajat created tensions between them and the local residents (Hazaras). The government did nothing to resolve the issue or work toward permanent settlement of the *Kochi*. When Hazaras complained about *Kochi* intrusions on their land, the state dismissed their complaints. When Daoud visited Hisa-e-Awal-e-Behsud, Wardak Province, in the early 1950s, the Hazaras submitted a petition to him to end *Kochi* migrations into their province. Daoud became enraged and responded that the *Kochi* had every right to be there and that the land belonged to them.²² Although Hazaras were conscripted into the army and children of the Hazara ruling classes became army officers, they were never promoted to higher ranks. Daoud demoted the only Hazara army general, Ahmad Ali, from command of the military division in Ghazni and reappointed him as a member of the Military Tribunal at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul.

One of Daoud’s major projects involved the freedom of women, and he encouraged female ruling family members and wives of senior government officials to spearhead the unveiling of women. They did this publicly in Kabul in 1959 during the anniversary of the country’s independence. Conservatives, traditionalists, and clerics vehemently

denounced this movement, however, it gained wide support among the middle class and intellectuals. Daoud was encouraged and became more determined to spread his policies of emancipation for women throughout the country. During his visit to Qandahar, wives of government officials again publicly removed their veils. Conservative clerics headed by Mawlawi Abdul Samad Akhundzadah and traditionalists were provoked and staged a massive protest demonstration that Daoud crushed with his army under the command of General Khan Mohammad. Daoud thus sent a message to opposition forces elsewhere that they would face a similar fate if they decided to fight his policies. More than six hundred conservative religious leaders were arrested and sentenced to several years of imprisonment; a number of them received death sentences.

Development scholars attribute Afghanistan women's emancipation to Daoud's leadership but often forget the significant role played by the infusion of external capital in the country's modernization initiatives. Foreign consumer items were found in abundance throughout the country's markets, and businessmen and merchants who needed consumers to purchase their imported products viewed women as potential consumers. Thus women's emancipation was necessitated by economic imperatives and the Daoud government only facilitated the process. Opposition to Daoud's policies began to grow. The elite aligned with the king viewed Daoud's close ties with the Soviet Union with suspicion and considered it a threat to Afghanistan's nonalignment policy. They were unhappy with Daoud's hostilities toward Pakistan, which led to the termination of diplomatic relations between the two countries. As their numbers grew, these intelligentsia became more vocal in their dissatisfaction and more aggressive in their agitation for political liberalization. Some members of the ruling family feared a revolt if the oppressive conditions were allowed to continue. Removing Daoud and replacing his regime with an elected government seemed a viable solution. By this means the leadership could shield the ruling family and attribute any mishandling or mismanagement of the country's socioeconomic and political development to the prime minister.

Zahir used his title and stature among the people to rally popular support and scheduled frequent public appearances to mobilize the citizenry. Zahir needed a trusted man in charge of the army's central command in Kabul who would remain loyal to him. He thought his uncle Shah Wali's son, Abdul Wali, as the right person to challenge Daoud. To this end Zahir married one of his daughters to Abdul Wali (1924–2008). Abdul Wali's rise to prominence made him extremely

arrogant; he bragged that with his uniform alone, without using the standing army under his command, he could control Afghanistan. Abdul Wali leveraged his influence in the military establishment to enhance Zahir's position and bargaining power with the current leadership.²³ Because Daoud's Pashtunistan policy had soured relations with Pakistan, the king and some of his advisors felt that Daoud's policy had isolated the country in the international arena. Instead of confrontation, they wanted to improve ties with Pakistan, and this meant that Daoud must step down. However, Daoud was unwilling to resign despite growing differences between himself and the king. To placate the king and his political opponents, Daoud adopted some flexibility in his policies and submitted a new policy agenda for the king's approval, including building a political party and transferring state power to this party and restricting the power of the ruling family in the government. At the same time, Daoud tried to strengthen his power base and initiated a policy of reconciliation with radical intellectuals. He even freed well-known social and political activists such as Mahmoodi, Sarwar Joya, and others from jail. These efforts did not yield tangible results, as the radicals did not trust or support him and the king rejected his proposals. Daoud finally resigned, and when he submitted his resignation on March 10, 1963, he articulated the need for a democracy and separation of powers, with an executive, judiciary, and legislative branches. People welcomed Daoud's resignation, bringing an end to a decade of authoritarianism and despotism. They naively believed that the post-Daoud period would bring genuine democracy and economic prosperity.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY, 1964–1973

After Daoud resigned, King Zahir asked Abdul Zahir to become prime minister and form a cabinet. He refused the offer and the king appointed Mohammad Yousuf, a Tajik from a middle-class family in Kabul, to the post. He accepted the offer and formed a cabinet on March 14, 1963. The king continued to exercise his authority, appointing loyal individuals to various posts in the government. The king's close circle of aides provided him with advice on the day-to-day affairs of the country. Prominent among them was Rahim, known as *Ghulam Bacha*. It is claimed that he played a major role in the appointment and dismissal of prime ministers. Individuals were recruited to senior and junior government posts who pledged loyalty to the king. Many of these individuals were

part of his intelligence network and many had no moral standards or lacked social distinction. Men of integrity, honesty, and commitment to the people and the country had little chance of being appointed to senior or junior posts in the bureaucracy.

In the international arena Yousuf improved relations with Pakistan, which led to resumption of diplomatic ties between the two countries in July 1963. In the domestic arena he tried to gain public support for his administration. To this end he sent a delegation of about one hundred men that included foreign and local professionals to provinces in the southeast and Hazarajat in the central region to inform the public about the changes he was making. The delegation met people, heard their grievances, and promised that the government would take action. In Hazarajat, people submitted petitions regarding tyrannical government officials and the annual intrusion by the *Kochi* on their land, but the government again failed to take action and resolve the issue. Although the trip was ceremonial, it was a step in the right direction to establish direct contacts with the citizenry; in the past, senior bureaucrats did not bother to visit the countryside, meet people, and explore ways to improve and streamline local administrations.

Yousuf's other important task was the formation of a commission to draft a constitution. On March 28, 1963, he appointed a commission headed by Sayed Shamsuddin Majrooh, Minister of Justice; individuals loyal to Daoud were also represented in the commission. While drafting the constitution, Noor Ahmad Etemadi, a distant relative of the ruling family and a member of the commission who had good relations with the king and Daoud, objected to the article that limited the power of the king and the ruling family in politics. Pashtun nationalist members of the commission such as Siddiquallah Rishtin opposed formalization of Persian as the official language.²⁴ A declassified memorandum from a U.S. Embassy official in Kabul who met regularly with the chairman of the Constitutional Advisory Commission reads, "[The] constitution envisages a significant change concerning language policy . . . There would be, as there is now, two official languages, Pashtu and Farsi, but the latter henceforth would be '*dari*' . . . The decision to term '*dari*' Farsi as the official language should placate the non-Pashtuns, for this term removes the connotation that *Farsi* is a foreign language."²⁵ After news leaked out that efforts were under way to make Persian an official language, dismayed Pashtun nationalists worked to oppose this action. A declassified memoran-

dum from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul described the situation in these words:

On June 6, 1963, a Pashtun personality with a known record of anti-Daoud activities, told the reporting officer that he has heard reports which suggest that Pashtun racist ideas are circulating in Kabul at a rate unknown for some years . . . He stated that many Pashtun leaders, most of them at one time associated with former Prime Minister Daoud, have actively been spreading the word that the Government of Prime Minister Yousuf is anti-Pashtun and that something should be done about it . . . He said that among those active . . . are (1) Mohammad Ismail and family; Ismail was Governor of Herat until 1959; (2) Abdul Ghani, the Governor of Qandahar from 1951 to 1959, when he was removed by Daoud because of the Qandahar religious riots; (3) Ishaq and Akram Osman, two of the sons of Ghulam Faruk Osman, the Governor of Jalalabad for several years until the autumn of 1960, when he was replaced by Daoud for alleged incompetence in the Bajaur affairs.²⁶

The Constitutional Advisory Commission completed its assignment on May 14, 1964, and a *Loya Jirgah* was convened on September 9, 1964, to endorse the draft of the constitution. During deliberation of the draft constitution, efforts were made to revise one of the articles to bar members of the ruling family from seizing political power. This was intended to eliminate the possibility of Daoud playing a role in the country's political affairs in the future. However, Daoud intended to circumvent the constitutional constraint by breaking ties with the ruling family and establishing a political party of his own, as he did when he seized power in 1973. During the *Jirgah* session, the issue of language was also debated when Ghulam Mohammad Farhad, founder of the *Afghan Millat* and representative from Kabul, objected to the inclusion of an article about the Persian language and proposed that the official language be Pashtu. After intense debate the constitution was endorsed on September 20 and the king approved it on October 1.

The constitution represented the aspirations of three generations of progressive and radical individuals who fought for freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the formation of political parties. It contained 11 chapters and 128 articles. Article 1 stated that "Afghanistan is a Constitutional Monarchy; an independent, unitary and indivisible state. Sovereignty in Afghanistan belongs to the nation. The Afghan nation is composed of all those individuals who possess the citizenship of the state of Afghanistan in accordance with the provisions of the law. The word *Afghan* shall apply to each such individual." Article 2 recognized the Hanafi faith of Islam as the official religion. Article 18 made

succession to the throne hereditary, and Article 24 barred members of the king's family from holding senior posts in the state bureaucracy—prime minister or minister, member of the National Assembly, or justice of the Supreme Court. Article 41 recognized the institution of the National Assembly, composed of the House of Representatives and the House of Elders, or Senate. Members of the House of Representatives were elected for four years and the king had the right to appoint one-third of the members of the senate for five years.

Although the constitution recognized Persian and Pashtu as official languages, the state stressed the need for promoting the Pashtu language, evidenced in changing the names of public institutions from Persian to Pashtu. Pashtun hegemony flourished as the government began to promote the Pashtu language and culture, culminating in the issuing of instructions that required government departments to write all correspondence in Pashtu. Weekly compulsory Pashtu courses were established so that civil service personnel could learn the language, and those who completed the required courses were entitled to an increase in their salaries. However, the program failed to make non-Pashtun civil service personnel fluent in the language; most did not attend the courses and instead bribed the instructors to give them passing scores. A declassified memorandum from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul described government efforts toward promoting the Pashtu language and culture in these words:

In fulfillment of Article 35 of the new constitution, the Prime Minister has given orders, announced in the press November 4, for the preparation of a program for the promotion of the Pashtu language. Instructions addressed to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Press and Information call upon them to cooperate with the various responsible government departments in developing appropriate plans. Among the activities foreseen are the translation of an increased number of foreign works into Pashtu, the improvement of Pashtu teaching methods, the sending of Pashtu scholars abroad to study philology, and the encouragement of artistic performances in Pashtu. The Prime Minister has suggested, according to the press report, that the planning of the new program be placed in the hands of a council under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education.²⁷

Although the constitution barred immediate members of the ruling family from occupying senior posts in the government and forced Daoud to resign himself to life in the private sector, Daoud's influence remained pervasive in the government for years. Powerful individuals

loyal to him tacitly worked to create obstacles to the implementation of some government policies. For example, when the government decided to launch an investigation into political prisoners who died in prison in the 1950s, the Interior Minister Sayed Abdullah opposed such a probe, believing that it would ruin Daoud's reputation. He resigned from his post, followed by the resignation of pro-Daoud individuals such as Abdullah Malikyar, minister for finance, and Ali Ahmad Popal, minister of education. Pashtun nationalists and pro-Soviets within and outside the state apparatus engaged in activities to undermine Yousuf's leadership.

Although the constitution allowed formation of political organizations (Articles 31 and 32), the king was not interested in democracy and ignored the laws on political parties. Several political parties, espousing various political ideologies, emerged and began publishing papers that propagated antigovernment views. These parties were the following:

- *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Muttaragi* (Progressive Youth Organization), which became known as *Sazman-e-Demokratik-e-Nawin-e-Afghanistan* (Neo-Democratic Organization of Afghanistan), or *Shula-e-Jawid* (Eternal Flame)
- *Afghan Millat* (Afghan Nation), a nationalist Pashtun organization referred to as the Afghan Social Democratic Party, headed by Ghulam Mohammad Farhad
- *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Muselman* (Islamic Youth Organization), also known as *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Islamic Brotherhood)
- *Wahdat-e-Milli* (National Unity), a promonarchy party headed by the king's advisor Khalilullah Khalili. It became known as *Zarnigar*
- *Hizb-e-Muttraqi-e-demokrat-e-Afghanistan* (Progressive Democratic Party of Afghanistan), headed by Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal
- *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]), headed by Noor Mohammad Taraki

The Russian imperial state influenced development in Afghanistan through its cliental party, the PDPA. The first person recruited by the KGB in 1951 was Taraki (code name Nur), and in 1957 the KGB recruited Babrak Karmal (code name Marid). However, the two agents did not have any knowledge of each other's role until 1962. Taraki recruited several others as KGB agents, including his close associate Hafizullah Amin (code name Kazem). The KGB financed publication of the PDPA's paper *Khalq* (Masses) from April 11 until May 16, 1966, and provided Taraki

with fifty thousand Afghani to campaign for the 1965 parliamentary election, as well as a monthly stipend of four thousand Afghani. Taraki provided information to the KGB on the country's political situation, the army, and the government and worked to promote Soviet interests in Afghanistan.²⁸ When personal differences emerged between Taraki and Karmal, Taraki informed the KGB resident officer that Karmal could not be trusted because he was the first political prisoner freed by the ruling family in 1952. The KGB rejected Taraki's remarks and compelled them to reconcile, but they never did get along with each other. In May 1967 Karmal left the party and formed his own party, *Parcham* (Banner). He founded a paper with the same name that was published under the editorship of Sulaiman Layiq from March 14, 1968, to July 15, 1969. Both *Khalq* and *Parcham* retained the original nomenclature of the PDPA.

Individuals who were not affiliated with any political group also published weekly and daily papers. The government did not censor private papers, but stopped their publication if articles were deemed inappropriate according to prescribed press laws. Other prominent weeklies were *Masawat* by former Prime Minister Maiwandwal (June 24, 1966, to December 26, 1966) and *Shula-e-Jawid* by Rahim Mahmoodi (March 27, 1968, to June 20, 1968). A Pashtun nationalist paper, *Afghan Millat*, was published by Ghulam Mohammad Farhad (April 5, 1966, to May 12, 1967), and its leftist wing, *Millat*, was published by Fida Mohammad Fidayi (September 26, 1961, to January 10, 1972). Religious-oriented weeklies included *Gahiz* by Menhajuddin Gahiz (October 13, 1968) and *Nida-e-Haq* by Mawlawi Abdul Sattar Siddiqi (September 15, 1971, to January 18, 1972). Prominent proestablishment papers included *Wahdat-e-Milli*, supported by Khalilullah Khalili (January 31, 1966, to June 20, 1966), *Mardom* by Sayed Moqadas Negah (May 11, 1966, to June 15, 1966), and *Jabha-e-Milli* by Abdul Rab Akhlaq (December 30, 1968, to June 15, 1969). Other influential papers included the weekly *Payam-e-Emrooz*, which was converted to a daily, *Sabah*, by Ghulam Nabi Khatir, and *Payam-e-Wijdan* (July 24, 1966) by Abdul Raouf Turkmani, which defended the rights of national minorities, and *Tarjiman* (April 18, 1968), a weekly satire by Abdul Rahim Nawin. These papers made significant contributions with regard to raising social awareness among the people. Some of these papers discontinued publication because the government banned them due to their critical views, while others ceased because of financial constraints. Others continued publication until the monarchy was overthrown in 1973.

Although the constitution recognized the equality of ethnic communities, ethnicity, regionalism, and tribalism played an important role

in the selection of personnel for government posts, as appointments as cabinet members, judges, governors, chiefs of provincial police, heads of provincial education, and so on remained the domain of the middle and upper classes, mostly Pashtuns. Intellectuals of other ethnic backgrounds were employed in various government departments, but they were excluded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were not promoted beyond the rank of colonel in the army or director general in civil service departments.

The expansion of educational institutions provided opportunities to minorities to acquire a modern education. Their education, instead of cultivating proestablishment sentiments, made them aware of their minority status. In school they studied history and learned about how preceding generations had been manipulated by the Pashtun-dominated government. They were exposed to various political and philosophical ideas, some of which accentuated their ethnolinguistic and regional differences, and gradually they began to express their demands for sociopolitical equality, and some even articulated regional autonomy. In order to deflect this growing trend among Hazara intellectuals and its impact on their communities, the state appointed two Hazaras to the cabinet. Abdul Wahid Sarabi was appointed minister of planning (1969–73) and Yaqub Lali was appointed minister of public works (1969–71) and minister of mines and industries (1971–73), but their roles as ministers were largely ceremonial.

When the parliamentary election was held in 1965, a number of Islamists, Pashtun nationalists, and candidates of the Soviet surrogate party, PDPA, were elected, including Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi from the Islamists and Ghulam Mohammad Farhad of *Afghan Millat*. Prominent *Parcham* faction members of the PDPA who were elected included Babrak Karmal and Anahita Ratebzad from Kabul, and Noor Ahmad Noor from Qandahar; however, Noor Mohammad Taraki, head of the *Khalq* faction, who ran as a candidate from the Nawah district of Ghazni, was not elected. Although the PDPA vocally supported a peoples' revolution, it concentrated its work within the armed forces, with the hope of toppling the regime and seizing power through a coup, as it lacked popular support. The PDPA regarded the United States as an imperialist power, but its leader attended regular meetings with a U.S. Embassy official in Kabul, visiting him at his residence and reporting to him what was happening on the political front. A declassified U.S. Embassy document reads, "Taraki has been a reliable source in reporting day-to-day developments on the Afghan scene, but his interpretation of the significance of some of these developments is often colored by his own monumental

impatience for rapid progress toward fully democratic institutions. His observations and comments, nevertheless, are helpful in providing additional insight into the nature of the slowly developing political scene in Afghanistan.²⁹ . . . He emphasized, however that he wished to enjoy discreet and occasional contact with the Embassy, and in particular to be invited to the July Fourth celebration.”³⁰

Taraki was not comfortable with Daoud’s concerted efforts to reinvent himself as a man supporting social justice, knowing his intention to seize power in the future. He tried to distinguish the PDPA from Daoud’s Socialist rhetoric, and during a discussion with a U.S. Embassy official in Kabul he stated that his party’s “platform would be slightly left of center . . . in order to pre-empt ‘that bastard’ Daoud who, Taraki said, continues to talk of his fondness for ‘socialism’ and will play an important political role at the appropriate time in the future.”³¹ The *Khalq* faction suffered a split when Tahir Badakhshi and his supporters left the group and later formed a separate party, *Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Zahmatkashan-e-Afghanistan* (SAZA; Organization for Freedom of the Toilers of Afghanistan), which became known as *Setam-e-Milli*. The organization’s sole objective was to fight national oppression. It considered the issue of nationality to be an important factor in the revolutionary movement.

The two major pro-Soviet groups, *Khalq* and *Parcham*, supported the monarchy. *Parcham* was known for its collaboration with state and the royal court and was accused by *Khalq* of being promonarchist and the party of aristocrats because most of the group’s leaders came from upper-middle-class families who supported the monarchy. During a speech at the National Assembly, Karmal obsequiously expressed his views regarding the monarchy:

It is the duty of each and every Afghan subject to pay his most heartfelt respect to such a King who, I dare to say, is considered the most progressive of all the Kings in the monarchist countries of Asia. This is the right which we sincerely believe in and revere, and no one can deprive us of this right to respect such a progressive king . . . It would be well to entrust the honorable Assembly, in contact with the Ministry of Court and the Ministry of Finance, to render new terms so that the authority and prestige of our King will be established and preserved.³²

Karmal and his close associate Ratabzad were despised by most conservative and traditionalist representatives. (Ratabzad worked as a maid in the house of former prime minister Shah Mahmood and King Zahir arranged for her marriage to his personal physician Kiramud-

din Kakar.) During a session on November 26, 1966, when the assembly was debating the country's budget, a difference of opinion emerged among the representatives, and Karmal's remarks on the topic angered most conservative and promonarchist representatives. Abdul Rashid, a representative from Pol-e-Khumri, physically assaulted Ratebzad with a walking stick, and another representative from Logar, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, who later formed the *Harakat-e-Engilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan) during the Soviet invasion, physically assaulted Karmal. A melee that broke out and Karmal and Ratebzad left the assembly, seeking refuge at the Ministry of Commerce adjacent to the assembly building, where one of their supporters, Abdul Salam, an official of the ministry, sheltered and protected them.³³

Yousuf, who headed the interim government prior to the endorsement of the constitution, was asked by the king to continue in his job as prime minister. He formed a cabinet and asked the National Assembly to ratify his policies and endorse his cabinet. Yousuf included several veteran bureaucrats in his cabinet—individuals whom the assembly accused of corruption and embezzlement of public funds. This generated opposition in the assembly and Yousuf failed to secure the needed vote of confidence. Monarchists with the backing of the military pressed the assembly to take a second vote, and on October 25, 1965, in a closed-door session, it cast a vote of confidence for Yousuf's government. On that day, student activists went to the assembly and demanded that they be allowed to participate in the parliamentary session, but the government rejected their demands. Later that day the students organized demonstrations. The government used force to restore order, claiming the lives of several people and injuring scores of others. Yousuf's opponents, particularly the Pash-tun nationalists who wanted an end to his leadership, criticized him for not handling the situation properly and the pro-Soviets opposed him for his pro-Western policies. These factors caused him to resign on October 29, 1965.

On November 4, 1965, the king appointed former ambassador to the United States and current Minister for Information and Culture Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal as prime minister. Maiwandwal's appointment was not welcomed by the Soviets because they regarded him as pro-Western. During a cocktail party a Soviet diplomat told his American counterpart, "Well, you Americans should be happy, at last your man got in."³⁴ Maiwandwal declared that his administration would work to improve the economy, support private investment, build schools, hospitals, and roads, fight administrative corruption,

and reduce taxes. Maiwandwal is the first person in Afghanistan to appoint a woman to his cabinet: Kobra Noorzai as minister of public health. The United States characterized Maiwandwal and his cabinet as pro-Western, stating that “most [of the] cabinet is clearly pro-Western. Maiwandwal himself is an old friend and knows the U.S. well, but he has to avoid further criticism that he’s in our pocket.”³⁵

Although Maiwandwal declared that he would establish direct contact with the people to learn about their problems and visit the countryside, he ended up meeting mostly with government officials and local nobles. As a gesture of goodwill toward students, Maiwandwal attended a memorial service held by Kabul University students for their comrades who died in the October demonstration. Maiwandwal tied a black kerchief around his arm as a symbol of mourning, and promised to find and bring to justice the responsible parties, release the students and faculty members arrested during the demonstration, and allow students to form a students’ union. However, he did not follow through on these pledges. Maiwandwal also tried to win the support of the National Assembly so that representatives would not oppose his government policies. To this end he exempted members of the assembly from paying taxes when purchasing vehicles. He also permitted each member of the Assembly to obtain a specific number (allocated quota) of passports for relatives and friends to visit Mecca, Saudi Arabia, for the *hajj* (pilgrimage). In effect, Maiwandwal bribed them so they would not challenge his rule.

To improve the economy, the state permitted foreign entrepreneurs to invest in Afghanistan and passed a new investment law bill. The advantages the bill offered included, “A five-year tax holiday, duty free imports of capital goods and raw materials. Investors (were) also exempted from personal income tax and corporation tax and dividends for the first five years . . . No export duties (were to) be levied on the export output of approved projects. Foreign personnel of approved enterprises (were) allowed to repatriate seventy percent of their income, net of taxes.”³⁶ As a result of this policy, several private banks were established in the late 1960s, including the Pashtani Tejarati Bank, the Mortgage and Construction Bank, the Industrial Development Bank, and the Agricultural Bank. Since the new law provided a profitable opportunity to foreign investors, a number of foreign-based corporations—International Corporation, National Westminster Bank, First National City Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank—and overseas subsidiaries of several other corporations invested in Afghanistan and bought shares in the newly established banks.³⁷ This trend of economic development led to a

gradual increase in the growth of private industries. Since the state monopolized heavy industries such as mines, gas, oil, and so on, private entrepreneurs concentrated their investments in consumer branches of the national economy.

To reduce the influence of the opposition parties, Maiwandwal used his position to enlist civil service personnel to his own party, the Progressive Democratic Party, which supported social democracy and a parliamentary system of government. In April 1967 the editor of a U.S. magazine, *Ramparts*, interviewed Abdul Latif Hotaki, an Afghan national in the United States, and published an article in which Maiwandwal was accused of being a CIA operative. Maiwandwal failed to respond to the allegation and was forced to resign in October 1967, ostensibly for health reasons. In an address to the nation he portrayed himself as the servant of the king, indicating that he had no power to initiate the changes he promised the nation when he assumed the office. Maiwandwal traveled to the United States for medical treatment and was admitted to the U.S. Air Force Hospital at Andrews Air Force Base, outside Washington, DC.³⁸ This fueled his opponents' suspicions that he was a CIA informant. After Maiwandwal resigned he participated in the parliamentary elections in 1969 as a candidate from his hometown of Muqor, Zabul Province, but was defeated by a powerful tribal leader. Ever since he has condemned the state for interfering in the elections. The ruling family wanted a pacified parliament; they supported proestablishment individuals against liberal-democratic and progressive candidates. Of 160 incumbents who ran for reelection, only 60 were reelected, and a proestablishment candidate, Mohammad Omar Wardak, was elected speaker of the National Assembly. Among the PDPA candidates, only Karmal and Hafizullah Amin were elected.

King Zahir asked Noor Ahmad Etemadi to be prime minister and form a government. Etemadi was a cautious man who could not quickly decide on issues. It took him twenty days to decide who should be in his cabinet and present his policies to the assembly for approval. He adopted a moderate policy to gain the support of the assembly. The United States characterized Etemadi in these words:

And now there is Etemadi who leads nothing and nobody. An honest and honorable man—not a mean feature in these parts, he is a man of very limited imagination, ignorant of economic problems (and apparently determined to remain so), cautious to the degree, and yet unbending—thus combining the disadvantages of two opposite courses of action. And with the prime minister showing neither talent nor real

drive for leadership, either within the country or toward Parliament, the other ministers are handicapped even if some of them had what it takes—and that is far from certain. And yet this may well be what the king wants.³⁹

During Etemadi's tenure political organizations remained illegal and he did not pressure the king to endorse the laws on political parties approved by the assembly. Despite forming two cabinets—November 15, 1967, to December 2, 1969, and December 2, 1969, to May 16, 1971—his administration failed to provide sound leadership to improve the economy and effectively deal with the growing radicalization of the student movements. Etemadi submitted his resignation and the king appointed Abdul Zahir, who served twice as speaker of the National Assembly and as a member of the Constitutional Advisory Commission, as prime minister.

Abdul Zahir, a conservative, studied medicine and had worked in various government departments. He formed a cabinet and presented his policies to the National Assembly, which approved them and cast a vote of confidence for his cabinet. Being a prime minister required diplomacy, managerial, and negotiating skills that Abdul Zahir lacked, and for this reason he delegated most responsibilities to his deputy Abdul Samad Hamid and his foreign minister Mohammad Musa Shafiq. His administration failed to provide effective remedies to the serious economic problems facing the country. A severe drought and famine from 1970 to 1971 devastated the country's economy and claimed the lives of thousands of people, but Zahir failed to take immediate action. When a fact-finding mission was sent to Chighcheran, Ghor Province, the people reacted to the visit by hurling stones at the building where the mission members were staying. Abdul Zahir made some progress on the political front by reopening Kabul University, which had been closed for 160 days. He made some concessions to the students' demands regarding educational policies, rules, and requirements in Afghanistan's universities, which resulted in the mass resignation of the full senate of Kabul University as well as the minister of education—an action that further reduced the efficacy of his government.

The issue of the Persian and Pashtu languages also became a subject of debate in the assembly, as Pashtun nationalist representatives worked to amend the constitution to require that all official correspondence utilize the Pashtu language and that all civil service recruits be fluent in Pashtu. In this way they intended to establish a monopoly of Pashtuns in government departments. Non-Pashtun

ethnic communities—Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, and others—expressed their objection to recognizing the primacy of the Pashtu language over Persian, arguing that Persian had historically been the language of the court. They also opposed Pashtun political hegemony, arguing that Pashtuns did not constitute a majority of the country's population as some documents suggested. They blamed the government for instigating such a debate to avoid a parliamentary hearing of senior government officials regarding the inefficiency of government agencies. In addition to political and economic problems, the government had to deal with security that had deteriorated throughout the country. In 1971 a British couple were murdered on the way from Kabul to Qandahar, four French tourists were murdered in Qandahar in May 1972, and two American tourists were killed on the way from Kabul to Jalalabad in October 1972. These events were contributing factors in Zahir's resignation on December 5, 1972.

King Zahir appointed Shafiq, then the minister for foreign affairs, as prime minister. Shafiq studied in Egypt and worked as head of law codification in the Ministry of Justice. In a declassified memorandum, a U.S. Embassy official in Kabul who frequently met with the head of the PDPA wrote about how the PDPA characterized Shafiq:

[Shafiq] had been a student of his about 1950, and that Taraki, taking an interest in this clean and bright young fellow, had taught him English and in other ways had encouraged his progress. Now, Taraki said, he was disappointed in Kamawi because he was abusing his official position to gain the favors of women whose families came to him in the course of business with the Ministry of Justice. Taraki also claimed that the members of the Constitutional Committee who had gone to Istalif in mid-October to prepare the draft of the Constitution, had taken 9 secretaries with them, the prettiest ones from several of the Ministries (he admitted, however, that the Ministry of Justice did not have any good secretaries). Taraki said that committee members posted a guard outside the hotel, then had a busy time 'drafting'. He claimed that he heard of this episode the very first day, commenting that news of such exploits quickly get around and render unpopular the government officials involved.⁴⁰

To maintain stability, Shafiq intended to enforce a law banning demonstrations and public meetings. In an attempt to neutralize the influence of revolutionaries and pro-Soviet reformists, he declared that his government intended to celebrate May Day as

International Working Class Day and ordered his government to inform the radical groups to refrain from May Day celebrations. Shafiq also strategically utilized Islam and promoted Islamic ideology in order to expand the social base of his government. As part of his Islamic agenda, Shafiq ordered Radio Afghanistan to say *azan* (the call to prayer) five times a day and demolished a Christian church built in the Dar al-Aman area in Kabul. He closed Western-style clubs and restaurants, and through these actions gained the support of the *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman* and conservative clerics. Shafiq tried to fuse the state and civil society and provided the media with access to the minutes of parliamentary sessions. He also established a public relations office to cater to public grievances and refer them to appropriate government agencies for action. The merging of the two daily papers, *Anis* and *Islah*, into a single daily paper with greater circulation was also intended to promote state-public relations and efforts were made for the daily to be delivered to major cities.

Shafiq improved ties with the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan. On March 12, 1973, he signed a treaty with Iran that stipulated the volume of water that flowed from the Helmand River to Iran. Shafiq also tried to negotiate with Pakistan regarding the issue of self-determination for Pashtuns residing on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line. He invited Nikolai Podgorny, then the president of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to Afghanistan in order to assure the Soviet leadership that Afghanistan was not acting against the interests of the Soviet Union in their efforts to normalize relations with Pakistan and Iran. Shafiq's opponents, representatives in the National Assembly—pro-Soviets and Pash-tun nationalists—exploited the water treaty with Iran, discrediting him and calling him a traitor because they did not want closer ties with Iran. The pro-Soviets in particular regarded the Shah of Iran as a U.S. agent and believed that closer ties with the shah would reduce Soviet influence in Afghanistan and in the region.

THE SUPERPOWER POLITICS OF AID

Afghanistan lacked the financial resources and skilled human capital necessary to modernize its economic infrastructure and its corresponding political, cultural, and educational institutions. The ruling class decided to approach the United States and the Soviet Union to assist with Afghanistan's modernization efforts. The United States was interested in Afghanistan's strategic proximity to the Soviet

Union. In his testimony before the U.S. Congress, George McGee stated that "Afghanistan is an important country of South Asia and its strategic location further augments its significance."⁴¹ The United States provided economic assistance to Afghanistan's development programs in order to establish its influence there and reduce the increasing influence of the Soviet Union as well as the spread of communism in south Asia. The United States declared that its south Asian policy was based on supporting the political orientation of countries there toward the United States and Western democracies, with the objective that these countries distance themselves from the Soviet Union. In addition, the United States assisted these countries in the maintenance of internal and regional security by providing them with U.S.-made military equipment and spare parts as needed.

The United States supported the educated liberal social strata within Afghanistan's ruling class because it considered this group an effective agent for serving U.S. interests, in part because they worked against the efforts of the more reactionary conservatives. U.S. companies were interested in broader trade relations with Afghanistan, and a trade mission visited Kabul to explore the prospects for U.S. markets. The mission reported that "American manufacturers and exporters must give more attention to the Afghan market. Many products such as automobile and truck tires, trucks and buses, agricultural machinery, commercial ice-making machinery, tannery equipment and shoe-making and construction machinery and materials, appear to us to have an excellent market potential there."⁴²

U.S. influence on education since the mid-1950s was manifested mostly in curriculum development for village and vocational schools and providing institutions for teachers' training. Beginning in the early 1960s, the United States took a more active role in modernizing the country's educational system, building schools and colleges and providing funding to modernize and enlarge the Kabul University campus. Previously dispersed colleges were consolidated in a new campus, and classrooms, administrative buildings, laboratories, and a dormitory were added. The College of Engineering was established with a "five-year program and administration of the faculty follow essentially an American model. Most of the faculty members have received graduate training in the United States."⁴³ The United States also granted scholarships for students and civil service personnel to study in U.S. universities and sent American personnel to work in Afghanistan's educational

institutions.⁴⁴ Of the students who studied in the United States, approximately one-third decided to remain in there or returned to Afghanistan only briefly before immigrating to the United States. The most common reasons for immigration were marriage or health problems, and a few applied for political asylum. Lucrative employment opportunities with U.S. companies was also an attraction, with the result that many students remained in the United States and failed to play an active role in the sociopolitical and economic transformation in Afghanistan.

U.S. participation in modernizing Afghanistan's communications and film industry took the form of training people with journalism backgrounds and other communications-related fields. News agencies such as United Press International (UPI) and the Associated Press (AP) supplied news and documentary materials to Afghanistan's media and the United States Information Service (USIS) provided English-language media materials and language courses.⁴⁵ The United States also provided aid and loans for agricultural development (agricultural commodities, chemical fertilizers, wheat, edible oil, etc.), family planning, mining, and industry and transportation infrastructure. The United States built the Kabul-Jalalabad and Kabul-Qandahar roads that connect Kabul to the Pakistan borders of Peshawar and Quetta and the Herat-Islam Qala road that connects Herat with Iran. These roads made it easier for merchants to import foreign commodities and to export raw materials to the world market.

The Soviet Union, as a rising power, competed with the United States in widening its sphere of influence and extended political, economic, and military support to Afghanistan to counter U.S. influence there and in the region. Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev, during a visit to Kabul, articulated his country's policy toward Afghanistan: "I went there [to Afghanistan] with Bulganin on our way back from India [in 1955]. It was clear that America was courting Afghanistan . . . The Americans were undertaking all kinds of projects at their own expense . . . The Americans hardly bother to put a fig leaf over their self-centered, militaristic motives . . . It's my strong feeling that the capital which we have invested in Afghanistan hasn't been wasted. We have earned the Afghan's trust and friendship, and it hasn't fallen into the American trap; it hasn't been caught on the hook baited with American money."⁴⁶ The Soviet leader also expressed his country's support for Afghanistan's policy concerning the rights to self-determination of Pashtuns residing in Pakistan: "We sympathize with Afghanistan's policy on

the question of Pashtunistan. The Soviet Union stands for an equitable solution of this problem which cannot be settled correctly without taking into account the vital interests of the peoples inhabiting Pashtunistan.”⁴⁷

The Soviet leadership objected to any engagement by Western countries in development projects in the northern region of Afghanistan bordering the Soviet Union. When French technicians under the UN tried to explore for oil there in 1952, the Soviet Embassy in Kabul objected to their work, stating that “oil exploitation in areas of Afghanistan bordering on the Soviet Union, by foreign firms and specialists belonging to aggressive NATO Atlantic bloc . . . might endanger the frontiers of the USSR and might do damage to the good neighborly relations existing between the USSR and Afghanistan.”⁴⁸ As a result of the veiled Soviet threat the Kabul leadership ended the project and in 1957 granted the Soviets the right of oil exploration in the area. In November 1959 a Soviet oil exploration team stated that “we are here for a long time. The Afghans need our help . . . why don’t you Americans go home? Afghanistan is our neighbor not yours.”⁴⁹ The Soviet Techno-Export Company conducted mineral and oil exploration in Afghanistan and surveyed coal and iron deposits as well as gold and lapis lazuli deposits in 1963. Eventually the company took over much of the country’s hydrocarbon industry: “The extensive Soviet exploration resulted in additional first-rate geologic reports and maps and identification of over 1,400 mineral showings or concurrence as well as 70-odd commercial deposits. The Soviets then committed over \$652 million in oil for further resource exploration and development, including a half-million-ton oil refinery, a 1.5 million tons per year copper smelter, and many other projects . . . Afghan cement manufactured at world quality is now reportedly sent to the USSR for export to the world market and replaced in Afghanistan with low-standard Soviet cement.”⁵⁰

Intensive Soviet engagement in the exploration of mineral and oil resources resulted in the removal of many Western technical advisors from both the Ministry of Mines and Industries and the Cartographic Institute in the late 1960s. The Soviets signed an agreement with Afghanistan for the extraction of natural gas that stipulated that the gas had to be exported to the Soviet Union for ten years and the Soviet Union would “pay \$0.174 and \$0.19 per 1,000 c.f. of gas to Afghanistan in 1972 and 1973, respectively, while the price paid to Iran was \$0.307 per 1,000 c.f. for gas . . . the total losses to Afghanistan (gains to the Soviet Union) for the

two years were, respectively, \$13,058 million and \$11.363 million.”⁵¹ Soviet aid toward Afghanistan’s development also included the construction of roads via the Salang Tunnel that connected Kabul to the Soviet Union’s southern borders through Pol-e-Khumri, Baghlan, and Qunduz, terminating at the Amu River port. This road facilitated much of the trade and business between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. The Soviets also issued loans to Afghanistan to support agricultural projects and participated in setting up two citrus farms with a total area of five thousand hectares in the Jalalabad Valley. The farms of Hadda and Ghaziabad were the first mechanized agricultural enterprises, with more than nine thousand workers, most of them former landless peasants.⁵² Other Soviet assistance included the building of storage tanks for petroleum and grain silos, improvement of river ports, electric transmission lines, chemical fertilizer plants, irrigation projects in Sardeh, Ghazni Province, power and irrigation projects in Naghlu, a military airport in Bagram, and apartment complexes in Kabul, to name just a few.

In the educational arena the Soviet Union provided financial aid to modernize educational institutions, financed the building of several vocational schools in Kabul, and organized training courses for technical personnel. A major educational project was the construction of Kabul Polytechnic Institute, which was completed in 1966, with five departments covering eighteen fields with an emphasis on architecture and civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering. The Soviet Union sent seventeen Soviet professors to administer and teach there; between 1955 and 1971 approximately 1,050 Soviet educational personnel served in Afghanistan.⁵³ The Soviets also granted scholarships, and approximately four thousand students went to the Soviet Union for advanced education between 1955 and 1979.⁵⁴ It is estimated that seventy thousand skilled workers were trained in the Soviet Union between 1955 and 1985.⁵⁵

The Soviet media provided news and cultural documentaries for local consumption and the Soviet Embassy in Kabul distributed informational pamphlets on economic, scientific, and educational progress in the Soviet Union. The Soviet news agency *Telegrafone Agentsvo Sovetskogo Soyuza* (TASS) provided material to Afghan news agencies.

In contrast to the United States, students who completed their advanced education in the Soviet Union tended to return home and work in Afghanistan, even those who married Russian citizens. Most of these intellectuals were army personnel—that was

also a factor in their returning home. In addition, many of these army officers had jobs and followed Soviet-style Marxist ideology. Upon their return home, a number of these people established links with the PDPA and actively worked toward effecting political change in Afghanistan. Table 2.1 shows loans and economic assistance from the United States and Soviet Union to Afghanistan's development programs.

Dependent policies of development did not improve the country's economy or the peoples' standard of living. Instead, the mostly ill-crafted policies led the country into a deep socioeconomic crisis: "The debt repayments were running at some \$7 million annually, but within five years annual repayments on earlier debts rose to \$25 million-equivalent to over 30 percent of total export earnings at the time. Almost two thirds of repayments were due to the Soviet Union, the chief creditor."⁵⁶

THE END OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY, 1973

During Shafiq's tenure, the country's economy remained stagnant and the living conditions of the working class and poor deteriorated to the point that almost a million and a half people left for

Table 2.1 U.S. and USSR loan and economic assistance, 1949–1972 (in millions of dollars)

Country	Aid	Prior to first 5-year plan	First 5-year plan, 1957– 1961	Second 5-year plan, 1963– 1967	Third 5-year plan, 1968– 1972	Total
U.S.	Economic	91.5	97.3	155.7	53.1	397.6
	Military	—	1.2	4.7	—	5.9
USSR	Economic	5.6	126.9	258.3	126.1	516.9
	Military	100.0	NA	NA	NA	100.0

Sources: U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations: Obligation and Loan Authorizations, 1 July 1945–30 September 1985, 8; U.S., U.S. Agency for International Development, *Helping People* (Kabul: U.S. Embassy, April 1979), 35. Afghanistan, Ministry of Planning, Majmu'aci Aisayawi-e-Sali 1350 [Statistical dictionary of 1971] (Kabul: Matbaa-e-Dawlati, 1350 [1971]), 161.

Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Middle Eastern countries. Seeds for a grassroots-based social revolution were planted. A 1972 World Bank report described the crisis in Afghanistan in these words:

The past fifteen years have been frustrating and disappointing for those concerned with the development in Afghanistan. A relatively large volume of aid sustained high levels of investment to little visible purpose in terms of higher standards of living for the majority of the population. To some extent it was inevitable that the major share of investment would be needed for basic economic and social infrastructure, with long gestation periods. However, it has proved difficult to move from this stage to the point where effective use can be made of the infrastructure created and a proper impetus can be provided to the kind of productive activities which result in wider-spread increases in income . . . The responsibility for this situation lies with the inadequacies of administrative structure. This is reflected in the failure of the government to manage the large number of public enterprises efficiently, to allocate funds within projects so as to secure the maximum return, to gear up its administrative capacity to prepare new projects and to promote the institutional and legislative changes needed to create an appropriate environment for private agricultural and industrial development.⁵⁷

Strategies of nation building articulated and implemented by the ruling class did not extend beyond their narrow class interests and led to their alienation from civil society because (a) the ruling class did not allow members of the middle and lower classes to participate in the country's politics and play a role in the day-to-day decision-making process and (b) they monopolized key economic and industrial enterprises as well as import-export activities. Lacking popular support and financial resources for development, they relied on foreign companies and imperial powers and allowed them to invest in Afghanistan. Such a trend of development blocked the growth of the national bourgeoisie and relegated the existing ones to subordinate positions from which they could not provide leadership for the country. The ruling class maneuvered to remain in power either through the use of coercive force or false promises. Sociopolitical and economic issues hastened the crisis of legitimization of the state and paved the way for change. There were rumors that a military coup was in the making by several individuals associated with the ruling family—former prime minister Daoud and the king's son-in-law Abdul Wali and influential figures outside the ruling family such as former prime ministers Maiwandwal and Shafiq.

On October 17, 1972, Taraki informed the KGB that Daoud was planning to seize power through a coup. In May 1973 his alert was corroborated by a KGB agent and member of the *Parcham* faction, Abdul Samad Azhar (code name Fatekh), who also informed the KGB of Daoud's plan for a coup.⁵⁸ Daoud seized power in 1973 in a military coup that toppled the monarchy.

CHAPTER 3



MILITARY PUTSCH AND REGIME CHANGE

POSTMONARCHY STATES AND RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

During the constitutional monarchy, deteriorating living conditions, rising unemployment, and administrative corruption intensified the drive for radical transformation as the ruling elite failed to come up with appropriate responses to improve the situation. The pro-Soviet *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]) lacked the capacity for a grassroots revolution and they viewed a military coup as the quickest route to seize power. Senior leaders of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA, which cultivated good relations with former prime minister Mohammad Daoud (he strengthened ties with the Soviet Union during his tenure [1953–63]), began to collaborate with him and supported his political agenda to establish a republican regime. *Parcham* maintained that supporting and working with Daoud would provide the party with public acceptability and that a figurehead leader with no Socialist credentials would be more acceptable in a traditionally conservative society.

As Daoud forged an alliance with the pro-Soviet PDPA and worked toward seizing power he explored the reactions of the United States, who maintained friendly relations with the government of Prime Minister Shafiq. Daoud's trusted aide Wahid Abdullah discussed the issue with U.S. Ambassador Robert G. Neumann in Kabul: "Wahid Abdullah, Director of Information, MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] came to [the] residence at his suggestion. Wahid is well known to us as a long time fervent supporter and booster of former PM [Prime Minister] Prince Daoud. At that time he asked me what would be the U.S. reaction to Daoud's re-assumption of

power. In response I inquired whether he was asking under instruction from Daoud. He stated cryptically 'Daoud knows I am here.'"¹ The United States maintained that it was unlikely that Daoud would take such a course of action against the interests of the ruling family. "Daoud's known politics and family and dynastic loyalty makes a coup seem unlikely Likeliest explanations in my view are (a) that Daoud is considering a more active role after a long period of inactivity and (b) that his main threat, if any, would most likely be to act in the royal family council rather than by external force."² The U.S. response that it did not concern itself with the internal affairs of Afghanistan was encouraging news to Daoud, who launched a military coup on July 17, 1973, while King Zahir was in Italy, declaring Afghanistan a republic. Although King Zahir's son-in-law Abdul Wali, chief of staff of the army's central forces in Kabul, resisted the coup, he was forced to surrender when tanks fired on his residence. The army arrested the king's son Ahmad Shah, the heir apparent and caretaker of the government, as well as Prime Minister Mohammad Musa Shafiq, taking them from their residences in Kabul. King Zahir's uncle Shah Wali was also in Kabul. When he was informed about the coup he initially thought that his son Abdul Wali had carried out the coup. Shah Wali's personal attendant Din Mohammad described Shah Wali's immediate reaction to the putsch: the first question Shah Wali asked him was "'Has Abdul staged the revolution?' The police did not tell him that he was being arrested, only that he was being summoned to Kabul for important consultations. When he was told that it was Daoud who had brought about the revolution, he is reported to have said, 'After all, he too is our son.'"³

After Daoud seized power the KGB instructed Noor Mohammad Taraki, secretary-general of the *Khalq* faction of the PDPA, to support Daoud and directed his men to work for Daoud; the KGB provided Taraki with fifty thousand afghani to secure his cooperation.⁴ *Khalq* and *Parcham* referred to Daoud as the Red Prince, father of the nation and the leader of the revolution, and threw their support behind him. Daoud's pictures were displayed everywhere and the state-controlled media promoted his policies. However, a significant portion of the population remained critical of Daoud's leadership, which they viewed as little more than a transfer of power from one member of the ruling family to another. These citizens and progressive social forces did not view Daoud as a solution to Afghanistan's socioeconomic and political problems. Taraki, expressed his views toward Daoud: "We thought that may be [*sic*] Daoud would take some action in the interest of the oppressed class of people . . .

He delivered a speech called 'Address to the Nation' which, compared to the objectives of the monarchical regime, was progressive. We were satisfied with this speech and we were right in supporting Daoud in the light of this speech."⁵

There were rumors that Daoud had formed a central committee composed mainly of army officers who had participated in the coup and senior *Parcham* leaders such as Babrak Karmal, Mir Akbar Khayber, and Anahita Ratebzad. However, the committee remained informal, as Daoud, for his own personal reasons, did not make it official. Soon after the coup Daoud formed a cabinet; half of the ministers were affiliated with *Parcham*, including individuals such as Faiz Mohammad, minister of the interior, Pacha Gul Wafadar, minister of tribal affairs, Abdul Hamid Muhtat, minister of communication, Mohammad Khan Jalalar, minister of trade, Nimatullah Pazhwak, minister of education, and Ghulam Jilani Bakhtari, minister of agriculture (a KGB agent code name Rakkas). Mohammad Hasan Sharq, a known pro-Soviet sympathizer, was appointed deputy prime minister. He denied any association with the pro-Soviets and depicted himself as a Muslim nationalist. Although Daoud stated that the monarchy became ineffective because the leadership did not appoint qualified patriots to positions of authority, he too appointed a number of people to the cabinet who lacked adequate qualifications and social distinction but were his close friends. For example, Wahid Abdullah was appointed deputy minister for foreign affairs and Sayed Abdul Ellah was appointed minister for finance, not for their credentials or experience, but because their fathers were Daoud's close aides when Daoud was prime minister. Daoud curbed freedom of association, banned private papers and political parties, and called upon political groups to join his administration and support his sociopolitical agenda. He sent his supporters, mainly members of the *Parcham*, throughout the country to explain state programs and policies to the people with the intention of soliciting public support for his policies.

Pro-Soviet forces supportive of Daoud dealt severely with those they considered to be a threat to the regime. Former prime minister Maiwandwal became one of their victims. Maiwandwal, who was outside the country when Daoud seized power, returned and met with Daoud and his brother Mohammad Naim, with whom he had worked in the past. He expressed his support for the new regime. It is said that Daoud wanted to send him to a diplomatic post in the United States, but the pro-Soviets in Daoud's government were unhappy with such a proposition and pushed to eliminate him instead.

They believed that he would use his position to strengthen ties with the West, which might lead to marginalization of Soviet influence and its client party, the PDPA, in the country's politics. In September 1973 the regime declared that it had arrested Maiwandwal on charges of a coup attempt. State interrogators led by Faiz Mohammad, minister of the interior, and Samad Azhar, chief of the police, both members of the *Parcham*, extracted confessions from Maiwandwal on the alleged crime attributed to him. A few days later it was announced that Maiwandwal had committed suicide in prison. The regime also arrested several other army officers and civilians in connection with Maiwandwal; some were executed and others received sentences that ranged from several years to life imprisonment.⁶

Daoud depicted the regime as revolutionary and portrayed himself as a dedicated servant of the people, but the public remembered his despotic style of governance in the 1950s and did not believe he had changed. Daoud was known by the title *Sardar* (a title for members of the ruling family, which means chief or a noble person). He tried to distance himself from King Zahir and other members of the ruling elite and encouraged his supporters to no longer call him *Sardar*, but to use his name, Daoud. During his first few months in office he allowed the expression of antimonarchist political slogans to further boost his image as an iconoclast leader. However, after the deposed king recognized his leadership, Daoud allowed the king's immediate family members to leave the country for Rome and secretly continued to send a monthly stipend to the king and his family. "The King and Queen received \$2,500 a month each plus \$1,000 for each child and other close relatives—about \$10,000 a month in all."⁷ Individuals associated with the ruling family, the Mohammadzai, continued to hold senior positions in the government and similar posts in the executive and the judiciary were reserved for certain members of the Mohammadzai clan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was administered entirely by the Mohammadzai family, and of the twenty-one ambassadors, ministers, and consul generals assigned abroad in the early period of Daoud's rule, sixteen of them were Mohammadzai.⁸

After consolidating his power base Daoud initiated a number of reforms. In the education sector, students enrolled in grades one through three were exempted from annual examinations. Primary schools were upgraded from six to eight years and after graduation students were required to sit for entrance examinations to high schools. The reform brought religious and secular educational institutions under the control of the state. In the economic arena, Daoud announced a seven-year development policy that stressed industrialization, growth

of the private sector, and nationalization of the banking system. This policy encouraged state intervention in economic development by imposing capitalism from the top without altering the precapitalist mode of production.

Daoud announced his nationwide land reform initiatives and distribution of state land to landless peasants in July 1975 and promised their implementation by August 1976. This was part of the state's continuing effort to legitimize the regime as well as avert the prospect of peasant uprisings. People were not allowed to sell agricultural lands until after the completion of land reform, although exceptions could be granted with the permission of the Land Reform Bureau. People were skeptical of the reforms and it was reported that Daoud's brother Naim began selling his landholdings and transferring his money to an overseas bank account. The land reform program "envisaged the maximum size holdings of 20 hectares for better lands and 40 hectares for poorer [land]. Under the law the state redeemed surplus land from landowners over and above the established maximum on a deferred payment plan [over] the next twenty-five years at two percent interest. The redeemed lands should be sold to landless peasants also on the deferred payment plan of twenty five years and at the same interest rate."⁹

The state set up the Rural Development Board and charged it to analyze economic and social conditions in each village and to evaluate and register landholdings into one of two categories, higher grade and lower grade. The board sent a delegation into the villages to promote and implement the program, which encountered problems almost immediately. State officials in charge were not paid adequate salaries and began to supplement their incomes by soliciting bribes from landowners seeking to have their landholdings registered with the lower land grade, thus allowing more hectares of landownership. Landowners also used their social influence to register their landholdings in the names of their sons and grandsons, which reduced the officially registered number and size of their landholdings, reducing the number of landholdings that would be subject to sale to peasants.

Newly adopted economic policies did not prevent rising unemployment and exploitation of the peasantry by feudal landowners and the country's trade deficit continued to grow. For instance, the 1973-74 trade deficit of \$35.2 million rose to \$41.2 million in 1975-76 and the cost of living rose from 97 percent to 111 percent in 1974 and to 129 percent in 1975.¹⁰ This situation generated disenchantment among the middle class, blue-collar workers, intellectuals, and the peasantry. A great number of blue-collar workers and the rural poor legally and

illegally migrated to the Persian Gulf states in search of employment. During the first two years of Daoud's rule almost one million laborers migrated out of the country, most of them going to Iran.

Reform in the political arena included appointment of a committee to draft a new constitution. Daoud convened a *Milli Jirgah* (Grand Assembly) at the end of January 1977 to endorse the constitution. There were 219 delegates; Daoud appointed 130 of them, including military officers, blue-collar workers, farmers, urban intellectuals, and women in an attempt to display the *Jirgah* as a democratic institution. The *Jirgah* was chaired by Daoud's trusted aide Azizullah Wasifi, a Pashtun from Qandahar, and it endorsed the constitution, which contained 13 chapters and 136 articles. Article 20 declared the country a republic, Article 21 stated that the word *Afghan* applies to all ethnolinguistic communities and individuals residing in the country, and Article 23 made Persian and Pashtu the official languages. The constitution was an authoritarian document that provided for a presidential system of government within the framework of a single-party system. Article 40 stated that "For the reflection of social demands and for the political education of the people of Afghanistan, until such time as this aspiration is realized and attains its natural maturity, the one-party system led by *Hizb-e-Engilab-e-Milli*, which is the founder and vanguard of the popular and progressive revolution of Saratan 26, of the year 1352, of the people of Afghanistan, will prevail in the country."¹¹

The constitution also recognized the existence of the traditional *Loya Jirgah* as the supreme manifestation of the peoples' will and power, and its members included members of the *Milli Jirgah*, members of the central council of the ruling party, government officials and army officers, a few representatives from each province, and a few individuals who were appointed by Daoud. The *Loya Jirgah* was responsible for amending the constitution, elections, acceptance of the resignation of the head of state, and endorsement of declarations of war and armistice. Article 76 stated that the president, after nomination by the ruling party, will be elected for a six-year term by the *Loya Jirgah* with a two-thirds majority of votes cast. Prior to the *Jirgah* electing the head of state, Daoud dissolved the cabinet, ended military rule, and attended the *Milli Jirgah*.

Daoud ascended to his first presidency by means of a military coup, and with this election he wanted to distance himself from the past and be elected by popular acclaim. To this end he engineered a scheme, with the assistance of Wasifi, chairman of the *Jirgah*, and other trusted aides. Daoud declared publicly that he was not a presidential candidate and expected the delegates to then unanimously request him to

nominate himself for the post. Instead, a female delegate who misunderstood the gesture, stated that Daoud was already a candidate, but Wasifi told delegates that Daoud was not a candidate. Another delegate who did not understand the intent of the statement said that if Daoud was not a candidate then Ghulam Haidar Rasouli, the deputy defense minister, should stand as a candidate. This naive bumbling prompted Daoud to change tactics, and he immediately declared his candidacy and told the delegates that he was ready to be president of the country on one condition—so long as he had the stamina he would serve the nation. Daoud's statement was meant to demonstrate his intention to be president for life. Then, to loud cheers, the delegates unanimously elected Daoud as president of the country.

Daoud formed a cabinet and again appointed individuals who were his friends, sons of his friends, and those who supported his political agendas. He established his own party, *Hizb-e-Engilab-e-Milli* (National Revolution Party) in July 1977, which became the only political party allowed to engage in politics. Daoud became head of this party and was responsible for appointing its executive members. The KGB instructed Taraki to infiltrate Daoud's party to monitor and engage in anti-Daoud activities from within, and ordered him to avoid unnecessary contacts with members of the central committee of the PDPA.¹² Differences emerged between Daoud and members of his party, as they were not happy after Daoud appointed his confidants as executive members of the party. At the forefront of the opposition was Wahid Abullah, deputy minister for foreign affairs; however, the group reconciled its differences with Daoud through the mediation of Daoud's brother Naim.

In his foreign policy, Daoud supported the Non-Aligned Movement, defended the rights of Palestinians, condemned the apartheid regime of South Africa, and strengthened ties with the Soviet Union. Daoud's antimonarchy rhetoric and posturing antagonized the shah of Iran, a staunch U.S. ally in safeguarding U.S. interests in the Middle East. The shah perceived closer ties between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union as a threat to stability in Iran and tried to install King Zahir's son-in-law Abdul Wali as the new ruler of Afghanistan. When the shah's close advisor suggested facilitating Zahir's return to western Afghanistan to mobilize the tribes and regain power the shah rejected this idea, stating Zahir "lacks the guts for anything like that, we must simply have patience and await developments." However, the shah ordered that Zahir "be given a provisional advance of \$20,000 and an assurance that we are handling the matter with utmost discretion . . . arrangements for the king of Afghanistan's pension, \$10,000 a month

out of secret government funds.” The shah also instructed his advisor to discover whether Abdul Wali needs any financial support. “We’ve made an allowance to Princess Belqis, but it would be wrong for her husband to be entirely reliant on her. Remember what I told Nelson Rockefeller . . . one day we may install Abdul Wali as the new ruler of Afghanistan.”¹³ While awaiting developments in Afghanistan, and in an attempt to compel Daoud to temper his rhetoric, the shah ordered a targeted raid of Afghanistan military posts on the border, claiming the lives of seventy soldiers.¹⁴ The shah also forced deportation of an estimated one million illegal Afghans working in Iran, who, upon their return home, were unable to find employment, further fueling social discontent.

The situation became volatile, posing a major threat to the *status quo*. Daoud sent his brother Naim to Tehran to normalize relations between the two countries so that the shah would again allow Afghan laborers to work in Iran. Relations improved between the two countries; Iran allowed Afghan laborers to return, and in October 1974 the shah pledged \$2 billion in economic aid for Afghanistan’s development projects, including building a railroad linking Kabul to the eastern city of Mashhad in Iran and Quetta in Pakistan and building a road linking Lashkargah to Zahidan, Iran. The project was intended to provide the country with access to the sea that would facilitate trade and business between Afghanistan and other countries without using the traditional routes through Russia and Pakistan.

Daoud continued to support the right of self-determination for the Pashtuns of Pakistan as he did when he was the prime minister. He set up a radio station—Radio Pashtunistan—broadcasting news for the Pashtuns of Pakistan, and government papers referred to the Pashtun-settled regions in Pakistan as the “occupied lands.” Daoud perceived the lifting of the arms embargo on Pakistan by the United States as a threat to the balance of power between Afghanistan and Pakistan and expressed his views on the issue in these words: “The lifting of the arms embargo on Pakistan by the United States government in a time when Pakistan is engaged in shedding blood in Baluchistan and Pashtunistan has caused grave concern to the people of Afghanistan. It will lead to imbalance in the region and promote an arms race and will create an additional threat to peace in the region.”¹⁵

In 1975 Baluchi dissident Mir Hazar Ramkhani, head of the Parari movement, and his men sought refuge in Afghanistan and waged a guerilla war on Pakistan from sanctuaries in the southern region of Afghanistan. Daoud and successive leaders provided Baluchis with a subvention of \$32 per month per person, for a total amount of

\$875,000 per year.¹⁶ Daoud also provided tacit military training to Pashtun and Baluchi dissidents in two military camps in Kabul under the supervision and control of the Republican Guards as well as arms and munitions to Pakistani dissidents in the border areas. When the government of Pakistan protested Kabul's support to the Baluchi dissidents the Kabul regime dismissed Pakistan's accusations and declared that these people were refugees. The pro-Soviets supported Daoud's hostility toward Pakistan, believing that if tensions between the two countries led to a full-scale war it would compel Afghanistan to seek Soviet support and this would help the pro-Soviet forces establish their influence in Afghanistan.

Daoud's policy of supporting Pashtun and Baluchi dissidents worried Pakistan's leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and forced him to retaliate. He established an anti-Kabul propaganda center in Pakistan and provided sanctuary to opponents of Daoud, including Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of the *Jamiat-e-Islami*, Ahmad Shah Masoud, a member of *Jamiat-e-Islami*, and Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, of *Hizb-e-Islami*, supporting them against Daoud. Bhutto initiated road construction in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) bordering the eastern region of Afghanistan to facilitate deployment of Pakistan's military forces against possible uprisings by Pashtun tribes in the region.

[Bhutto's] drive toward superficial modernization of the Tribal Areas was clearly prompted by the overthrow of the monarchy in neighboring Afghanistan. It was part of a strategic military offensive designed to destabilize Daoud. That is why the Razmak camp in South Waziristan was reactivated, and that also explains the desperate rush to construct new roads and improve communications. The high command in Islamabad was determined to forestall a 'Pathandesh' on its northern frontiers. Bhutto's forward policy was designed, by putting maximum pressure on Kabul, to permanently foreclose the Pashtunistan issue. A tribal revolt that erupted on 21 July 1975 in the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul was planned and executed by Afghan exiles financed and armed by Islamabad.¹⁷

These actions by Bhutto forced Daoud to soften his rhetoric and consider normalizing relations with Pakistan, as he came to realize that a friendly Pakistan was in his best interest because he needed time to consolidate his position at home. He accepted mediation by the shah of Iran to normalize Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan. The shah offered his services, as he too was concerned that the Baluchi movement might spill over in the Baluchi-settled region of Iran and

destabilize his country. Daoud expressed his gratitude to the shah: "We are deeply gratified for Iranian economic assistance to Afghanistan, and likewise we are thoughtful for the interest which Iran takes in eliminating tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan."¹⁸

RELATIONS WITH THE SUPERPOWERS

In June 1974 Daoud visited the Soviet Union and met with Soviet leaders, who agreed to increase Soviet participation in Afghanistan's development projects. The Soviet Union provided a loan extension of \$428 million for the country's development projects, which included irrigation systems, thermal power, and copper smelting plants, expansion of their chemical fertilizer industry, and construction of a grain silo and textile mills. In 1975 the Soviet Union provided \$600 million to help Afghanistan finance its five-year development plan that had been initiated in 1973. A year later they provided another loan of \$3.6 million to pay for a geological survey and assorted agricultural and construction machinery (see Table 3.1). Soviet aid also enabled installation of a radio-telephone system between Kabul and Mazar, a laboratory for analysis of minerals, and airport construction. The Soviets also deferred a one-hundred-million ruble loan to Afghanistan made under a technical and economic assistance agreement. The exporting of natural gas to the Soviet Union, which began in October 1967, increased to the extent that by January 1977 Afghanistan had exported approximately 23 billion cubic meters at a rate of about 2.8 billion cubic meters per year, or about 45 percent of Afghanistan's total exports to the Soviet Union.¹⁹

The United States remained engaged in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Kabul in November 1974, meeting with Daoud and promising economic assistance to Afghanistan. He also

Table 3.1 U.S. and USSR economic assistance to Afghanistan, 1973–1977 (in millions of dollars)

Country	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Total
USA	33.0	16.4	19.3	12.0	9.1	89.8
USSR	428.0	—	600.0	3.6	—	1,031.6

Sources: U.S. Agency for International Development, *Helping People* (Kabul: U.S. Embassy, April 1976), 35; *The Quarterly Economic Review* (1975), 21; (1976), 18–20; (1977), 17.

persuaded Daoud to improve relations with Pakistan. The United States characterized Daoud's personality and his political views in these words:

He is a strong nationalist who will seek aid wherever it is available. He claims to be a non-aligned neutral, but his determination to modernize Afghanistan resulted in a heavy reliance on the Soviet Union for assistance when he was prime minister. He listed U.S. military aid to Pakistan and inadequate U.S. support for Afghanistan as the precipitating factors in his turn to the USSR. He felt that there was little danger in relying on that country for economic and military supply. According to news accounts, Daoud once said he was happiest when he could light his American cigarettes with Soviet matches.²⁰

However, the United States was apprehensive with regard to Daoud's dependence on the Soviet Union for economic and military aid and Afghanistan's policy toward Pakistan and Iran: "Daoud's cordial relations with the USSR may jeopardize the ratification of a pending treaty on the apportionment of the waters of the Helmand River, as well as the access to road and port facilities that the Shah has promised to Afghanistan. The Shah is likely to view any threat to Pakistan's unity as a threat to Iran."²¹

To reduce Soviet influence in Afghanistan, the United States maintained: "We continue to demonstrate our friendly and tangible interest through a visible American presence in this country."²² One leading U.S. export to Afghanistan was second-hand clothing, with an estimated total value of \$900,000. This served as an example of elements of U.S. aid that had a less than beneficial effect on traditional local industries: "The influence of old clothes here has all but killed Afghanistan's age-old hand-loom industry . . . The more expensive homespun clothes simply cannot compete with the cheap machine-sewn foreign castoffs that seem to herald the first invasion of Western imperialism into this remote land."²³

Daoud was determined to distance himself from the Soviets and strengthen ties with the West, and on June 30, 1976, he sent his brother Naim to the United States, where he met with the secretary of state and discussed Afghanistan's apprehension with the Soviet Union. Naim stated,

We have, of course, received Russian arms. To man them properly we have had to have officers and men trained in the Soviet Union. In the areas of economic development, such as oil research, for example, we

also had to send people to the Soviet Union for training. Now the Soviet Union is counting on these people who were trained there. As a result, we feel that the security situation vis-à-vis our Soviet neighbor is becoming more and more undesirable . . . We want to be more informed about the intentions of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan . . . Whatever information can be given to Afghanistan with respect to the intentions of the Soviet Union toward Afghanistan would be of great help. This help, of course, should not be visible.²⁴

The United States agreed to provide intelligence information, undertake the training of military officers, and provide economic aid so Afghanistan could distance itself from the Soviet Union. U.S.-Afghanistan relations improved to the extent that Afghanistan supported the U.S. policy with regard to the future of the island nations of Puerto Rico and Guam and the United States increased its level of involvement in Afghanistan's economic development (see Table 3.1). The United States described the strengthening of relations with Afghanistan in these words: "U.S.-Afghan relations during 1977 were excellent. The government of Afghanistan (GOA) fulfilled an obligation to the U.S. to establish a joint commission to control narcotic production and trafficking. Daoud accepted an invitation to make a state visit to the U.S. in the summer of 1978. Funding for the U.S. military training program for Afghan officers was doubled in an effort to offset—albeit to a modest degree—the massive Soviet predominance in the area of foreign support for the Afghan armed forces."²⁵

FRACTURED POLITICS: END OF THE REPUBLICAN REGIME

Economic and financial support from the United States, Iran, and other Middle Eastern countries enabled Daoud to distance Afghanistan from the Soviet Union and decrease the country's dependence on Soviet aid. Afghanistan's military was equipped with Russian-made weapons and became dependent on the Soviet Union for spare parts and training. Daoud sent increasing numbers of military officers and students to acquire advanced military training and education in Egypt and India, however, a small contingent of army officers were also sent for training in the West. The number of students sent to the Soviet Union decreased from 1972 to 1975 and the number of students sent to the United States increased (412 Afghan students were awarded scholarships to study in the United States, compared to 384 who went to the Soviet Union).²⁶

Relations between Daoud and the Soviet client party, the PDPA, deteriorated in late 1974. The PDPA was unhappy with Daoud's efforts to strengthen relations with the West and for his attacks on the party's politics—Daoud increasingly made remarks to the effect that Afghanistan cannot accept imported ideologies. The PDPA was determined to confront Daoud and he in turn worked to consolidate his position. In September he purged PDPA members from the cabinet, with Wafadar, Muhtat, and Sharq appointed to diplomatic posts abroad, and he humiliated Colonel Abdul Qadir, head of the air force, by appointing him head of the Kabul slaughterhouses. Daoud did not dismiss PDPA members holding junior and lower-ranking posts in the government because he did not view them as an immediate threat. The PDPA described Daoud's policy and his confrontation with it in these words: "Signing contracts with the imperialist countries runs counter to the interest of Afghanistan's economy and independence. Advocating a passive policy toward the Pashtunistan question damages the interest of the Pashtun people . . . These are concrete evidences showing that the reactionary forces have consolidated their positions within the state apparatus and deliberately prevent the country's socioeconomic development."²⁷

Daoud visited Moscow in April 1977 to defend his decision to strengthen Afghanistan's relations with the West and to express his concerns about subversive activities of the Soviet client party, the PDPA. The Soviets had their own grievances and concerns about events unfolding in Afghanistan, including Kabul hosting the Non-Aligned Movement conference, its decision to press for dismissal of Cuba from the movement, its growing ties with countries having closer economic and military ties with the United States, and Daoud's purging of PDPA members from the government. The Soviets' dissatisfaction with Daoud's domestic and foreign policies manifested in a contentious meeting between Daoud and Leonid Brezhnev, during which Brezhnev expressed concern and dismay over the growing involvement of Western countries in the northern regions of Afghanistan bordering the Soviet Union. The Soviet leader regarded such developments as a danger to Soviet security and demanded that Daoud expel all Western advisors from the country. Daoud was emboldened by his strengthened ties with the West and rich Middle Eastern countries. No longer depending solely on the Soviet Union for economic assistance, he responded to Brezhnev's remarks by slamming his fist on the conference table and stating that Afghanistan would not allow the Soviets to dictate how they managed their country and who to employ in Afghanistan. How and where to employ alien professionals

would be the right and responsibility of the government of Afghanistan. If Afghanistan remained poor it would still retain the right to decide its own affairs.²⁸

Daoud's remarks caused the Soviet leader to terminate the meeting. Souring relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union compelled Daoud to further strengthen Afghanistan's relations with the West and Middle Eastern countries. He also visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in April 1978. Daoud adopted an aggressive approach toward his political opponent, the PDPA, presenting himself as a nationalist and abandoning the use of any leftist-oriented terminology as he had at the beginning of his rule. Instead he talked about Afghan nationalism and national pride.

Daoud's aggressive stance with the Soviets and his decision to distance himself from the Soviet Union and strengthen ties with the West sealed his fate. Indeed, Daoud's policy of lighting his American cigar with a Russian match undid him. The pro-Soviet groups *Khalq* and *Parcham* reunited in the early summer of 1977 and challenged Daoud's leadership. Moscow advised both groups to select and train substitutes for every member of the PDPA's central committee, city, and provincial organizations. This was a fallback tactic in the event that Daoud arrested senior party leaders. The PDPA also spread rumors that the PDPA had dissolved itself. From March 15 to May 25, 1977, the KGB provided Taraki with 30,340 afghani to support these activities.²⁹ It is suggested that in addition to the pro-Soviets there were other forces that opposed Daoud's leadership. In November 1977 a man named Marjan assassinated Daoud's close aide Ali Ahmad Khorram, minister of planning. There were rumors that some of Daoud's close aides—Ghulam Haidar Rasouli, defense minister, and Sayed Abdul Ellah, deputy prime minister and minister for finance—were not happy with the *status quo* and intended to seize power.

Hostilities between Daoud and the PDPA intensified when Mir Akbar Khayber, a leading ideologue of *Parcham*, was assassinated on April 17, 1978, and the PDPA accused Daoud of murdering him. After the Soviets invaded the country the PDPA changed its story and accused Hafizullah Amin of murdering Khayber. Siddiquallah Rahi, brother of Soviet-installed leader Najibullah who defected to Pakistan, argued that Karmal had conspired to murder Khayber because he was a serious challenger to Karmal's leadership.³⁰ Similarly *Hizb-e-Islami* claimed that they had killed Khayber to prevent the PDPA from seizing power. As hostilities between Daoud and the PDPA reached their climax, Daoud ordered the army and police to maintain a state of readiness during Khayber's funeral on April 19, 1978, in case of

disturbances. The PDPA staged a large-scale anti-U.S. demonstration in Kabul and this gave Daoud an excuse to arrest senior PDPA leaders, Taraki, Shah Wali, Dastagir Panjshiri, Abdul Hakim Sharayi Jawzjani, Zahir Safi, and Karmal. The following day he arrested Hafizullah Amin, who prior to his arrest had communicated the message to army officers who carried out the coup on April 27, 1978.

A day before the coup Gulabzoi (code name Mamad) and Mohammad Rafi (code name Niruz) informed the KGB of the PDPA's intention to carry out a coup. Soviet Ambassador Alexander Puzanov informed Moscow that in his view, radical action by the client party might harm the activities of the progressive forces.³¹ However, the PDPA was determined to topple Daoud's regime. The fourth and fifteenth tank brigades and elite commandos were charged with seizing Kabul and key government buildings, and the air force and air defense forces were directed to support them. Daoud, his brother Naim, and a number of his family members were killed in the palace, as well as Daoud's trusted aides Sayed Abdul Ellah and Abdul Qadir Nooristani. Although the pro-Soviet regime claimed that one hundred people were killed during the coup, opponents of the regime put the number at more than a thousand. Daoud's elite Republican Guard of about two thousand men resisted to the end. Those who survived were imprisoned and later executed. The Military Revolutionary Council was led by Amin, Colonel Abdul Qadir (code name Osman), head of the air force, and Major Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, commander of the first battalion of the fourth tank brigade. The council was renamed the Revolutionary Council. It declared a state of martial law and informed senior party leaders about the coup's success. On April 28 Amin contacted KGB resident officers and asked them whether Taraki should address the nation on behalf of the PDPA or the Revolutionary Council or whether he should be proclaimed as head of state and secretary-general of the party simultaneously. The KGB informed him that the head of state must be announced without reference to party affiliation, and on April 30 the Revolutionary Council issued a decree that made Taraki the head of state. At this time the KGB assigned him the code name Dedov.³²

The 1978 April Putsch: Socialism Imposed

Taraki was from the Nawah district of Ghazni and belonged to the Ghilzai Pashtun tribe. After attending a village school in his hometown and working for a while in a private company in Qandahar, Taraki went to Bombay and worked as a clerk for a trade company owned

by Abdul Majid Zabuli, a wealthy Afghan businessman. In Bombay he came into contact with Indian Socialists and learned the English language. Upon his return to Afghanistan he worked at various institutions and was appointed a cultural attaché at the Afghanistan Embassy in Washington, DC, in 1953. Taraki returned home after he was dismissed from his post at the embassy and his asylum application in the United States was denied. Taraki worked as a translator for the United Nations (UN) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and later established his own translation service in Kabul. Taraki reflected on Daoud's policies of collaboration with the West and his hostility toward the PDPA that compelled it to retaliate: "When Daoud attacked us and treacherously put us into prison, our comrades in the armed forces, according to our previous instructions issued to the responsible liaison member, launched the insurrection in broad daylight, destroying forever the decayed Daoud regime and replacing it with the present Khalqi government."³³

Taraki justified the April coup as a bona fide Socialist revolution, not unlike the one that occurred in Russia, and even claimed that it created a new model for people in the developing world to follow: "If the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 rocked the whole world, the Great Saur Revolution, which triumphed with the inspiration of the Great October Revolution, also jolted all the toiling people of the world and drew their best wishes. It was particularly an example for the developing countries to liberate their own toilers from the oppression of exploiters and to wrap up the vestiges of imperialism and reaction."³⁴

The most influential and powerful figure of the regime, Hafizullah Amin, entertained similar views regarding the putsch, glorifying it as a unique revolution in the twentieth century. Amin was born in August 1929 in Paghman, Kabul, and after completing his schooling he attended Kabul University's College of Sciences. He became a teacher and later the principal of the Abu Ali Cina (Avecinna School) in Kabul. He attended Columbia University, receiving a master's degree in education, joined the PDPA in 1965, and was elected to the National Assembly from Paghman in 1969. He was a shrewd and politically manipulative figure, fond of the American lifestyle. Although some people equated him with the Yugoslavia's leader Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980), he was not a Tito, but a fascist and a sadist disguised as a Socialist and had no mercy for those who opposed him. Amin's ruthlessness was revealed when he stated that those who conspire against us in the darkness of the night will be eliminated in the darkness of the night. Amin vehemently condemned the monarchy

and Daoud's republican regime and glorified the April coup, calling it a genuine revolutionary movement advancing the cause of the working class. Amin further glorified the coup when he called the October Socialist revolution of 1917 in Russia a classic example of the revolutionary movement and the April coup as an example of a modern-day revolution. Elaborating on this point, Amin wrote,

The leadership had realized that it would take a long time to follow the classical way of wresting the political power by the working class, as this called for toppling the government simultaneously with the crushing of the Afghan army, creating a new revolutionary one . . . [It] was even impossible for many years to come . . . Finally, under the leadership of the PDPA and with the participation of the officers and soldiers of the armed forces who were party members . . . the Afghan version of proletarian revolution started at nine in the morning of the 7th of Saur [April] and ended at seven in the evening the same day . . . Prior to our "revolution" the working classes everywhere wanted to follow in the footsteps of the Great October Socialist Revolution. However, after the Great April [Saur] Revolution the toilers should know that there does exist a shortcut which can transfer power from the feudal class to the working class and our revolution proved it.³⁵

The ruling party said the coup was an irreversible revolution and declared the state a democratic entity that represented the interests of the oppressed strata—workers, peasants, the national bourgeoisie—and rank-and-file members of the party willingly believed the dogma. Glorifying the April coup continued, with signs and billboards printed with the statement *Engilab-e-Kabir-e-Saur* (the Great Saur Revolution) found everywhere. One sign, written in the English language on a red piece of cloth, was posted at the Kabul International Airport. It read: "Welcome to the land of a new model of proletarian revolution." The party also attempted to depict itself as revolutionary and ordered residents of Kabul to paint the doors and windows of their houses red. The PDPA sought to promote Taraki as a national leader, superior to previous leaders, in an effort to garner public support for a man that a vast majority of people in Afghanistan did not know. The PDPA claimed that a list of Taraki's titles, from "Leader of the Revolution" to "Genius of the East," would take up an entire paragraph in newspapers and journals. To party members Taraki and the party were the same, a view that reflected in Amin's statement: "Party and Taraki are body and soul, can body be separated from soul? When we speak of party, we speak of Taraki, when we speak of Taraki, we speak of party."³⁶ Praising the politically naive Taraki and calling him by such

grand titles convinced Taraki that he was such a person. Although the party depicted Taraki as a revolutionary leader and a great Socialist, he was regarded as a fascist and a dictator by people who suffered under his rule, particularly the Hazaras, who not only endured years of suffering and economic and political deprivation but also experienced cruelty by the *Kochi* (Pashtun nomads) trespassing and violating their property. Taraki did not pay attention to the plight of the Hazaras, and the *Kochi* continued to violate their property. When the issue of the *Kochi* was brought to his attention during a meeting by a member of the party, Taraki was irritated and responded that the *Kochi* cannot be prevented from herding. He stated that it was better that the central region of the country, Hazarajat, be earmarked for grazing land for the *Kochi*, and Hazaras should be resettled somewhere else.³⁷

To firmly establish its hold on power the PDPA dismissed most high-ranking government officials and appointed *Khalq* and *Parcham* members to key leadership posts—individuals who lacked the experience, knowledge, and qualifications for the positions. Consolidation of the party's dictatorship required the elimination of opponents. To this end the regime used mass arrests, torture, and execution of people they believed to be a threat to their rule. The regime arrested individuals associated with the Mohammadzai clan (ex-king Zahir and Daoud), deprived them of their citizenship, and later allowed them to leave the country through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Former prime minister Shafiq was executed on charges of reaching an agreement with Iran on regulating water flow in the Helmand River to Iran. Wahid Abdullah, deputy minister for foreign affairs, surrendered and Ghulam Haidar Rasouli, defense minister, was seized and both were executed along with Wafullah Samiyi, minister of justice, and several other high-ranking officials of the Daoud regime.

The KGB seized control of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Security Agency, and the military's Counterintelligence Agency and seized confidential dossiers containing the identities of former agents during the monarchy and Daoud's regime. Government agencies were ordered to expel Western advisors from Afghanistan and replace them with Soviet ones.³⁸ The regime tried to transform Afghanistan into a Socialist society on the basis of the Soviet model without considering the historical and cultural differences between the two countries and Afghanistan's backward economy and primitive social and tribal formations. The regime changed the name of the presidential palace from *Arg* to *Khana-e-Khalq* (Peoples' House) and opened its doors for the public to visit and see the lifestyle of former dictators, but closed the

palace after a few days when Taraki established his office and residence there. To discredit the monarchy and the republican order the regime also displayed clothing, jewelry, and other household items owned by the king, Daoud, and their family members.

The leadership issued a number of decrees to expedite the process of political, social, and economic reforms in order to build a Socialist society with all due speed, but they failed to engage the peasantry, blue-collar workers, and middle-income strata in the process. Decree no. 2, issued on May 1, 1978, appointed Babrak Karmal, head of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA, as vice president of the Revolutionary Council; decree no. 3, published on May 14, 1978, abrogated Daoud's constitution and established civil and military courts and procedures for promotion of civil service personnel and teachers. Decree no. 4, dated June 12, 1978, changed the color of the country's flag from the traditional colors of black, red, and green to red; the new flag was unveiled on October 17, 1978. Red was prominent as a symbol of revolution, but by omitting the traditional Islamic invocation, "in the name of God, the merciful and compassionate," from the flag the state alienated itself from the people. Decree no. 5, dated June 14, 1978, stripped Afghanistan citizenship from twenty-three members of the Mohammadzai family of ex-king Mohammad Zahir and Daoud. Decree no. 6, dated July 12, 1978, reduced loans and mortgages, and was intended to put an end to centuries-long feudal practices. The reform granted exemptions to landless peasants and those holding 4.05 hectares of land from payment of financial debts and accumulated interest they owed to landowners who mortgaged their land in 1974 or before. Decree no. 7, published on October 17, 1978, was also significant because it supported women's rights and equality and imposed a heavy restriction on the payment of *mehr*, the amount of money paid to the bride as insurance to strengthen her position in case her husband divorced her, so she should not become dependent on the family. It also restricted other marriage-related expenses, such as giving gifts to the bride on various occasions. The decree also defined a new marriage age: sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys, prohibited arranged marriages, limited wedding expenses, and supported a woman's right to seek a divorce. Decree no. 8, issued on November 28, 1978, limited the size of landholdings of affluent rural families to six hectares of high-grade land, allowing the rest to be appropriated by the state without payment of any monetary compensation.

The decrees issued from above were poorly designed and implemented, and most officials lacked the necessary experience and were dogmatic in their beliefs and actions. Decrees no. 6 and 8 failed to

break the power of landowners because they contained many loopholes that landowners could exploit. Many landowners registered their land and property in the names of their sons and grandsons. Furthermore, the peasantry was not culturally or politically ready to accept these properties. In addition, the seizures were viewed as an illegal and immoral act and counter to their religious beliefs. Even those who might have been inclined to do so were not in a position to cultivate the land, as the landowners possessed all the equipment and tools needed to plow the land and harvest the crops, none of which could be seized per the terms of the decree, and so the peasants remained largely dependent on landowners. Some landowners killed those who seized their land in order to intimidate other peasants. The regime's failure to defend the peasantry against attacks by feudal landowners caused many peasants to oppose the land reform in order to avoid needless bloodshed among relatives and tribes.

A major initiative that was launched by the regime and that antagonized the people was the establishment of adult literacy classes. The regime used these classes to teach people their version of a "proletarian" consciousness and delegated the responsibility of conducting such classes to inexperienced party members. Recorded incidents indicate that some party members forced old women and girls to attend classes and used their position to molest them. The ruling party rejected allegations of numerous violations by its members and Taraki stated: "There has occurred only one event after the revolution in which a few thieves broke in a house and molested the family. So far we have not reached any agreement on what kind of punishment should be meted out to those thieves."³⁹

In the name of reform the regime readmitted thousands of eighth-grade students to high schools who previously failed to meet the requirements for admission put in place by the Ministry of Education. It also freed many prisoners, an action intended to gain public support for its policies. The ruling party restructured the army and the police, setting up political training programs staffed by party members and sympathizers in the newly created senior posts to educate soldiers and cadets in Soviet-style Socialist ideology. The party promised to provide food, clothing, and shelter for the people, but instead the ruling party executed opponents and buried them in mass graves.

Differences between *Khalq* and *Parcham* over social, cultural, and political issues came to a head shortly after the coup. *Khalq* occupied more key positions in the government, as they played a prominent role in the coup. They accused *Parcham* of being opportunistic, saying their leader Karmal was too fearful to carry out the coup, arguing

that an armed insurrection against Daoud was doomed to fail. This was also a reflection along ethnic lines. *Khalq* had more ethnic Pash-tuns who were in the armed forces, and *Parcham* was mainly individuals from the urban areas. After an interparty struggle, *Khalqi* decided to purge members of *Parcham* from senior positions and send them to diplomatic posts abroad. In July 1978 Karmal was appointed ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Ratabzad to Yugoslavia, Noor Ahmad Noor to the United States, Abdul Wakil to Britain, Karmal's half brother Mahmood Baryalai (code name Shir) to Pakistan, and Najibullah, known as *Najib-e-Gaw* (Najib the Bull) and the "Butcher of Kabul," to Iran. In August 1978 the regime arrested high-ranking officials associated with the *Parcham* faction, including Abdul Qadir, minister of defense, Shahpoor Ahmadzai, army chief of staff, and Dr. Ali Akbar, head of the Jamhoriyat hospital, on charges of a coup attempt; they were each given a death sentence. Mohammad Rafi, minister of public works, Sultan Ali Kishmand, minister of planning, and several other members of the *Parcham* faction were also imprisoned, and other members of the party were demoted from their positions in the government. Sulaiman Layiq, minister of radio and television, and Bariq Shafiyi, minister of information and culture, resigned from the party's political bureau but retained their membership in the central committee of the party. The two often appeared in state-sponsored rallies condemning Karmal and his associates as traitors.

The KGB appealed to Amin to free several agents: Mohammad Hasan Sharq, Mohammad Rafi, Abdul Qadir, Chief of Police Abdul Samad Azhar, Deputy Minister of Trade Abdul Salam, and others. Amin refused because he considered these individuals to be his deadly enemies. Concerned that Amin would decline other requests for clemency, the Soviet ambassador, Alexander Puzanov, instead appealed to Taraki to spare the lives of Kishmand and Qadir, who were considered important figures in the party.⁴⁰ In October the regime commuted the death penalty of Kishmand and Qadir to fifteen years behind bars and reduced the jail sentence of Rafi from twenty to twelve years.

As relations deteriorated between the two factions of the party Taraki and Amin clamped down on their rivals and imprisoned more *Parchamis* on charges of conspiracy against the ruling party, *Khalq*. In September the regime ordered senior *Parcham* leaders who were ambassadors abroad to return home, but they refused, seeking refuge in East European countries. Prior to leaving their posts they took huge sums of money from the embassies where they were stationed. It is said that Najibullah took US\$300,000 and Noor Ahmad Noor took US\$265,000. When they were appointed to senior posts in the

bureaucracy after the Soviet invasion they did not return the money, and no one in the government dared to question them about the embezzlement of embassy money or property.⁴¹ The *Khalq* regarded senior *Parchamis* as the ringleaders of the coup attempt and expelled them from the party's membership. Amin intended to eliminate Karmal and sent an assassination team to Eastern Europe, but the team failed to murder him as the plot was neutralized by Czechoslovakia's intelligence agency.

The Soviets supported the client regime and provided significant economic and military assistance, participating in thirty-one economic projects in May 1978, agreed to provide \$250 million in military assistance in July 1978, and announced a ten-year moratorium on debt payments by Afghanistan to the Soviet Union in August 1979. The Soviet Union also granted ten thousand scholarships for students to study in the Soviet Union to educate them in Socialist ideology and support the Soviet-backed regime when they returned home. The Soviets sent military technicians to Afghanistan to reorganize and train the country's armed forces; their numbers reached four thousand by December 1979.⁴² Soviet military and technical advisors were appointed in major government departments, and government officials had to secure their permission in handling daily affairs. Although people criticized the PDPA, calling them traitors who sold out the country to the Soviets, Taraki justified the presence of Soviet advisors on the grounds that "the Soviet experts are large in numbers to some extent because they are economical for us. You see other [foreign] experts demand \$2,000 to \$2,500 or \$3,000 as a monthly salary, but the salary of a Soviet expert is \$500 per month."⁴³

The Kabul regime was in trouble and needed more economic and military support. In December 1978 Taraki and Amin visited Moscow to seek increased Soviet support to enable the regime to consolidate itself and carry out its socioeconomic and political agendas. During a meeting with Brezhnev, a misunderstanding caused Brezhnev to leave the meeting without granting their request for more financial and military aid. However, Babrak Shinwari, a member of *Khalq*, and a representative in the National Assembly in 2005, depicted Taraki and Amin as independent of Moscow, stating that after the failed meeting the *Khalq* leaders agreed that "they had no option but to build socialism with shovels and home-made equipment."⁴⁴ By depicting the *Khalq* as patriots and nationalists, Shinwari intended to portray the rival *Parcham* as Russian stooges: in reality both *Khalq* and *Parcham* proved to be Russian lackeys.

The regime promulgated a new constitution on March 27, 1979, containing thirty articles. Article 1 recognized the Revolutionary Council as the supreme state power. Article 4 delineated the responsibilities of the Revolutionary Council, including the power to approve the constitution, issue decrees on state affairs, appoint the first minister (prime minister), and confirm treaties and agreements with foreign states.

Crisis of Legitimation

Political repression forced many people to leave for Pakistan. Among the first refugees were members of the upper class and officials of the previous government. Some of the refugees who met asylum criteria were repatriated to Western Europe, Canada, the United States, and other developed countries.

On February 14, 1979, four men, one of them wearing a police uniform, kidnapped the U.S. ambassador, Adolph Dubs, on his way to the embassy and took him to the Kabul Hotel. The kidnappers demanded the release of their leader, Bahr al-Din Bais, from jail in exchange for the release of the ambassador. Bais hailed from Badakhshan, an underdeveloped province, and was a member of a political group advocating equality and justice for ethnic minorities. During Daoud's rule (1973–78) he was imprisoned, but he escaped with the help of friends when he was being transferred to a hospital in Kabul for medical treatment. The KGB viewed Ambassador Dubs as a potential threat to Soviet interests in the country because he was knowledgeable on Soviet policies and had strengthened U.S.–Middle East relations. On the KGB's order, the Kabul regime sent armored police vehicles to tell the kidnappers to release the ambassador and then fired through the windows of the room where the ambassador and kidnappers were. Dubs died from two bullet wounds, two kidnappers were killed, one was captured, and the other escaped. By murdering Dubs, the Soviets intended to eliminate the seasoned U.S. ambassador and discredit the antiregime insurgency. American officials were barred from examining the hotel while the crime scene was altered in order to support the official story, that all four kidnappers were killed in the assault by Afghan forces outside of the control or influence of Soviet advisors. A Kalashnikov similar to the one used by the kidnappers was planted on the scene, the kidnapper who was caught alive as well as another prisoner randomly selected and declared to be the fourth kidnapper were quietly executed so they could not be questioned. Government buildings lowered their flags to half mast in honor of the ambassador.⁴⁵

The regime's coercive policy of consolidating the *Khalq* version of the proletarian dictatorship, intended to liberate the peasantry and laborers, instead provoked large numbers of people, including intellectuals and the middle class, to side with feudal landowners and conservative religious leaders in their fight against the state. As people continued to oppose the repressive regime and fight for their liberty and security the *Khalqis* blamed religious leaders for instigating disturbances and declared war on them. Taraki wrote that "the people of Afghanistan declared *jihad* against *Sheikhs* (priests), clerics, and *Ikhwanis* (Islamic Brotherhood) made in London and Paris and all our toiling Muslim people expressed hatred against them."⁴⁶

The regime's intelligence agency, *Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Aidara* (Organization for the Protection of the Security of Afghanistan [AGSA]), headed by Asadullah Sarwari, hunted down anyone suspected of expressing antiregime sentiment. The regime had no regard for the lives of prison inmates and executed most of them. On November 16, 1979, the Ministry of the Interior released the names of twelve thousand prisoners executed in the period after April 1978. The victims were educators, students, government employees, religious leaders, businessmen, and the children of political prisoners.⁴⁷ Wives who demanded information on the whereabouts of their husbands from government agencies were told by party officials to "get a new husband," and fathers who tried to discuss the fates of their sons were told that their sons had gone to the camp of the enemy of the state, Pakistan. Sayed Abdullah, head of the notorious Pol-e-Charkhi Prison, stated that "a million Afghans are all that should remain alive—a million communists. The rest, we don't need. We'll get rid of all of them."⁴⁸ AGSA confiscated the property of individuals detained and sold it through a shop that was opened as a front for these transactions. An estimated 4 million afghani were taken from affluent families, including Russian Nikolaev gold coins, boxes of jewelry from the family of prominent cleric Mojaddadi, and valuables belonging to former King Zahir and Mohammad Daoud. AGSA was subsequently compelled to submit part of the proceeds from their sales to Amin, who used his son as an intermediary to siphon an estimated thirty million afghani into Amin's personal bank accounts. About half of the more than fifty-five million afghani remitted to Afghanistan by the USSR also found its way into Amin's personal coffers.⁴⁹

Escalation of armed uprisings against the regime caused Amin to reshuffle the cabinet. He appointed his brother, Abdullah Amin, as chief security officer for several provinces in the northern region of the country and appointed many of his own tribesmen and loyalists to

senior positions in the government, reducing Taraki to a figurehead with a largely ceremonial role as head of state. Amin's ascendancy caused speculation of serious differences between himself and Taraki and the possibility of a power grab by Amin. However, Taraki vehemently denied that there was anything amiss, saying that "our enemies tell lies that there is a difference between me and Amin, but I tell them that we are like flesh and nail, and flesh and nail cannot be separated from each other."⁵⁰

The Kabul regime lost the support of the people and the growing insurgency prompted Moscow to consider which PDPA leader it should support to unite the party and stabilize the country. A KGB agent, Vladimir Kuzichkin, who defected to the West, wrote that the choice was between Karmal and Taraki. The KGB submitted a complete profile of the two leaders to the Politburo assessing the weaknesses and strengths of both candidates. The KGB did not favor Taraki because he had an erratic temperament and was not sophisticated politically, compared to Karmal, who understood the subtleties of politics. Karmal "had been a KGB agent for many years. He could be relied upon to accept our advice. The Politburo decided to back Taraki because Mr. Brezhnev said he knew Taraki personally. He was sure that Taraki would do a good job."⁵¹

On September 1, 1979, the KGB decided to remove Amin and throw their support behind Taraki, because Brezhnev believed he was in a better position to unite the party. Taraki was instructed to stop over in Moscow for a meeting with the Soviet leader after he departed Havana, Cuba, on September 10, where he participated in a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. Soviet leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Andrei Gromyko met privately with Taraki and urged him to implement the KGB's decision to remove Amin. Brezhnev stressed the inherent dangers of having a single individual in charge of the armed forces and the state security forces.⁵² It is said that Taraki also met Karmal and reached a consensus to unite the party. Amin's trusted aide Major Daoud Taroon, chief of the police department, accompanied Taraki during the trip and informed Amin of what was transpiring at the meeting in Moscow. When photographs of the meeting were released, Taraki was depicted as a criminal under indictment by the Soviet leaders. Amin exploited the photograph for his own advantage and ordered its publication in local papers to humiliate Taraki. In Kabul, Taraki's associates—Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, minister of the interior, Shir Jan Mazdoryar, minister of border affairs, Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoi, minister of communications, and Assadullah Sarwari, director of state security (the "gang of four")—plotted to

assassinate Amin while he was en route to the Kabul International Airport to welcome Taraki's return. Amin was informed of the plot and he replaced the person in charge of security at the airport and the person in charge of security on the road from the airport to the presidential palace with his own men.

On September 11 Taraki returned to Kabul to implement the instructions he had received from the Soviets. He met with cabinet members and informed them of the objectives of his trip to Havana and Moscow, but he concealed the main topic of discussion—removing Amin from power. The next day Amin met Taraki. After a formal exchange about the political situation in the country and the party, Amin displayed a paper to Taraki with the names of the “gang of four” who had plotted his assassination. Amin requested that Taraki dismiss them from their posts. Taraki glanced at the paper, expressed his apologies, and told Amin to consider the matter closed. Amin was not pleased with the meeting and left the palace. At another meeting with Taraki, Amin again demanded that Taraki dismiss the “gang of four” from their posts or he would no longer recognize him as head of state. Taraki held a meeting with the four officers to design a new plot to murder Amin the next time he came to the palace. This plot also failed because Amin was informed in advance and declined the invitation. He continued to demand that Taraki dismiss the “gang of four.”

A September 13 meeting did not produce tangible results, and the next day Amin instructed his men—Jandad, commander of the National Guard, and Yaqoob, head of the General Armed Forces—to disobey orders from Taraki and ordered his men in the army to remain alert and touch base with him constantly. The “gang of four” went to the Soviet Embassy and requested Soviet help in the removal and arrest of Amin. That same day Taraki asked Amin to come to the palace for a meeting to resolve their differences, saying Soviet Ambassador Puzanov wanted to serve as a mediator. Amin agreed, and when his entourage entered the palace and went to Taraki's office, soldiers fired on them, killing Amin's trusted aides Taroon and Nawab. Amin escaped and drove to the Ministry of Defense and took command of the army. Amin's men seized control of the palace and arrested Taraki and his aides. Moscow instructed Ambassador Puzanov and his aides to visit Amin and advise him that Taraki and his men must not be harmed.⁵³ Amin ignored the advice and his men murdered Taraki (he was suffocated with a pillow pressed to his face). The government-controlled radio announced Taraki's resignation from his post due to poor health; a few days later it was reported that he had died of his illness. Security forces buried Taraki's body in the dark of the night

so that no one, especially his supporters, would know the burial site. Later, when people discovered the location of his grave, they dug up and desecrated his corpse. The “gang of four” escaped and sought refuge in the Soviet Embassy in Kabul. On September 19 the KGB launched operation Raduga (Rainbow) and flew the “gang of four” to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where they remained until they were moved to Sofia, Bulgaria, on October 14. They remained there until the Soviets invaded the country in December 1979. The “gang of four” carried a considerable amount of cash as they left the country. According to documents, “4,220,000 afghanis and 53,950 American dollars were found when Sarwari’s car, used by the ministers to flee to the KGB clandestine residence in Kabul, was searched. All three refused the money and said that it was not theirs. The money remained without an owner. The Residency believed that Sarwari had taken this money from AGSA funds.”⁵⁴

Amin called members of the party’s central committee for a meeting on September 16, 1979, and appointed himself secretary-general of the party and head of state. Amin paid tribute to his fallen friends Taroon and Nawab for saving his life and renamed the cities of Jalalabad and Lashkargah, respectively, in their honors; however, residents refused to use the new names and continued to call these cities by their original names. Amin did not learn from history that a similar policy pursued by King Mohammad Nadir (1929–33)—renaming *Dar al-Aman*, founded by King Amanullah, as *Dar al-Fonoon* (Center of Knowledge)—did not gain public recognition. To consolidate his power base Amin dismissed senior officials loyal to Taraki and Karmal from their posts in the state and the army. He condemned Taraki and his supporters as being responsible for the execution of thousands of prisoners between April 1978 and September 1979, conveniently omitting his own role in these acts. Amin proclaimed “justice, legality, and security” as the major policy of his government and changed the name of the notorious intelligence agency AGSA to *Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* (Workers Intelligence Agency [KAM]) and appointed Aziz Ahmad Akbari as its head. He was replaced in November by Amin’s nephew and son-in-law Asadullah Amin. The new policy was intended to project a benign image of the intelligence agency, however, it was business as usual, and KAM actually increased its activities, searching houses and illegally seizing people on suspicion of antistate activities. Citizens of the country did not trust Amin and held him and Taraki responsible for the execution of thousands of people.

Amin's failure to garner widespread support compelled him to deal harshly with his opponents and critics. Political suppression and intimidation became a part of daily life to the extent that people bid farewell to their families, relatives, and friends each day not knowing whether they would ever see them again. To gain the support of clerics Amin ordered mosques be repaired and built new ones, bribed the more passive clerics to proclaim him *Olulamr* (he who rules through the authority of God), and allowed small-scale landownership and proclaimed his support of national capitalism. However, none of his efforts succeeded. Political repression continued as before, causing more people to leave the country and settle in the relative safety of the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan.

THE SOVIET INVASION: INSTALLMENT OF PUPPET LEADERS

Amin was despised by the people in general and the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA in particular. He had no option but to rely on the Soviets for assistance and tried to convince the Soviet leadership that he could crush the Islamic insurgency with further Soviet assistance. The KGB neither trusted him nor believed that he could deliver on his promises. The KGB determined that if an opportunity arose where Amin could take advantage of the rising Muslim insurgency and emerge as a recognized, viable leader of an Islamic Afghanistan, he would turn on the Soviet Union and terminate relations. Analyst cited Amin's past links with the Americans and his Western education. Although the KGB argued that Karmal should be installed as head of state, Brezhnev and the Politburo had no option but to continue supporting Amin for the time being.⁵⁵

Soviet leaders were dismayed with Amin when he murdered Taraki, and became even more suspicious of his policy of rapprochement with the West, fearing he would transform Afghanistan into an anti-Soviet base. Therefore they decided to remove him. Despite the growing rift between the Soviets and Amin, the Kremlin pretended that the relationship was positive and continued to express support for his regime. Amin became suspicious of the Soviet leadership because it harbored his political enemies. He requested the Soviets recall their ambassador because Amin suspected him of being involved with the conspirators who tried to assassinate him. The Soviets appointed Fikryat Tabeev, first secretary of the Regional Party Committee of the Tatar region, as ambassador to Afghanistan.

Relations with Pakistan had steadily deteriorated since the April 1978 coup as the PDPA leaders rejected the validity of the Durand Line, maintaining that all ethnic communities from the Oxus River to the Abasin (Indus River) are brothers, declared their support for the right to self-determination of the Pashtuns and Baluchis of Pakistan, and organized meetings of tribal leaders from across the border that denounced the military regime of Pakistan for suppressing its people. Kabul granted political asylum to Pashtun and Baluchi dissidents, provided emergency aid to Shorawar refugee camps in the southern region of Afghanistan, and recognized the Baluchi Liberation Front. Amin reflected on the Pashtun and Baluch issue stating: "Our sincere and honest brotherhood with the Pashtuns and Baluchis has been sanctified by history. They have been one body in the course of history and have lived together like one brother. Now the waves of their love and brotherhood extend from the Oxus to Attock, and they want to live side by side, embrace each other, and demonstrate this great love to the world at large."⁵⁶

Later Amin decided he needed to improve ties with Pakistan and persuade its leaders to cease their support of the Islamic fundamentalists operating from bases in Pakistan. He also indicated that he was prepared to recognize the Durand Line as the official border between the two countries and would cease supporting Pakistani dissidents in exile in Afghanistan. Pakistan was the beneficiary of a substantial amount of U.S. aid to counter Soviet support of Afghanistan, so Pakistan was not inclined to engage in any dialogue with Kabul unless the United States also felt in a conciliatory mood toward Afghanistan. Amin thus sent out feelers to the United States regarding improvement of ties with the West, but the United States remained indifferent.

Amin failed to stabilize the country because the PDPA was torn by dissension, the army was plagued by desertion, and Islamic fundamentalists supported by Pakistan and the United States were gaining strength and defeating the government forces. Factional fighting within the PDPA and Taraki's vengeful supporters weakened the party's capacity to deal with the insurgency. During a coup attempt in early December, Amin's nephew and son-in-law Asadullah Amin sustained severe injuries and was sent to Russia for medical treatment. With no shift in Pakistan and U.S. policies toward Kabul, Amin had no other option but to remain aligned with the Soviet Union. He requested Soviet leaders send a contingent of the Red Army to Afghanistan to defend the regime. Amin stated that "all my efforts to improve relations with the USA and other Western countries have been fruitless. Our possibilities have been exhausted. I consider myself

free from any obligations to the West.”⁵⁷ Amin believed that while the Soviet army maintained security in Kabul, government forces could be deployed to the countryside to fight the insurgency. He further maintained that sending government forces to fight outside of Kabul would also eliminate the possibility of a coup against him by officers still loyal to Taraki.

The Soviets, seeking an opportunity to oust him from power, responded positively to his request for the deployment of Soviet troops by sending a small number of Red Army troops to Afghanistan. On October 25, 1979, Lieutenant Colonel A. V. Petrov visited Karmal (code name Martov) in Prague. By November the “gang of four” and other exiled figures were in Moscow for a briefing by the KGB on a plan to oust Amin from power. Abdul Wakil and Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoi were told to return to Kabul to organize underground anti-Amin activities, while Karmal and the others would settle close to the Afghan border in order to swiftly move to Kabul after Amin’s removal from office.⁵⁸ In Kabul, rumors spread that Amin’s days were numbered and Karmal and his group would seize power. The Soviets wanted to remove Amin peacefully in favor of Karmal, but if this approach failed then they would use the threat of putting him on trial for the murder of Taraki, with the hope that the threat would make him step down. If both options failed, the Soviets would make use of its army, already in Kabul, to remove him. The KGB planted an officer as Amin’s personal cook with instructions to poison him. Amin was wary about further attempts on his life and frequently made changes to his menu. The cook eventually managed to serve him contaminated food and immediately left the palace. Amin lost consciousness and his personal guard summoned doctors to examine him; both a Soviet and an Afghan doctor responded. The Soviet doctor tried to have Amin brought to the Soviet Medical Corps, but his guard refused to transfer him to Soviet custody and the Soviets had no option but to resort to military force to eliminate Amin.

On the evening of December 27, 1979, operation Agat (Agate) was launched and Soviet troops camouflaged in local uniforms stormed the palace from three directions with the head of the KGB’s terrorist training school, Colonel Bayerenov, leading the assault on Amin’s palace at Tapa-e-Tajbeg.⁵⁹ In order to prevent any resistance by Afghan officers loyal to Amin, Soviet technicians and advisors working in the Afghan army were instructed to remove the batteries from tanks for maintenance purposes. “Over 700 members of the KGB from the Center and the periphery were dropped into Kabul to take part in operation Agate . . . over 100 of the KGB were killed in the attack

on the palace.”⁶⁰ The Soviets killed Amin and his guards and continued then occupied the country. Jandad, commander of the National Guard, was arrested, and Amin’s older brother Abdullah Amin was captured in Mazar, Balkh. Amin’s “three daughters, daughter-in-law, the wife of the eldest son Abdul Rahman, and the wives of Asadullah Amin were jailed in Pol-e-Charkhi prison. Two of Amin’s sons had been killed in the fighting.”⁶¹ Brezhnev justified sending troops to Afghanistan on the following grounds:

The unceasing armed intervention, the well advanced plot by external forces of reaction created a real threat that Afghanistan would lose its independence and be turned into an imperialist military bridgehead on our country’s southern border. In other words, the time came when we no longer could not respond to the request of the government of friendly Afghanistan. To have acted otherwise would have meant leaving Afghanistan a prey to imperialism, allowing the aggressive forces to repeat in that country what they had succeeded in doing, for instance, in Chile, where the peoples’ freedom was drowned in blood. To act otherwise would have meant to watch passively the origination on our southern border of a seat of serious danger to the security of the Soviet state.⁶²

The Soviets installed Karmal as head of state, president of the Revolutionary Council, secretary-general of the PDPA, and prime minister. Karmal belonged to an upper-middle-class Tajik family in Kabul and his father, Mohammad Hussain, was an army general, but Karmal avoided referring to his Tajik background, and for political reasons he called himself a Pashtun, but his opponents referred to him as a royalist. Karmal studied at Kabul University, worked at the Ministry of Planning, and maintained amicable ties with Daoud during his tenure as premier and president. Karmal condemned his predecessor Amin as a CIA agent and a criminal who assaulted and murdered innocent men, women, and children. Karmal remained a political prisoner in the palace and the Soviets provided him with their own security guards to protect him, as they did not trust the local officers to be in charge of his security. In the palace, “The Afghan soldiers did not have a single bullet in their assault rifles, whereas our men [Russians] were armed from head to toe. The only exception was the commander of the Afghan guard, who did have bullets, but they were in an iron chest under lock and key. It appeared that Babrak did not trust even his own carefully selected soldiers.”⁶³

The Soviet occupation of the country further eroded Karmal's reputation as a leader. People called Karmal the Shah Shuja of Moscow, in reference to King Shuja, who was installed to the throne by the British in the early nineteenth century, while Karmal was similarly propelled to power by Russian bayonets and tanks. People's disgust with the puppet leader was visible as they often referred to Karmal, whose name literally means "friend of labor," by the nickname *Karghal* (traitor to laborers).

Karmal despised the *Khalq* members of the party and berated Dastagir Panjshiri (code name Richard) for betraying him in the past. He asked the Soviets to hand over Amin's son-in-law Asadullah Amin, who was in the Soviet Union for medical treatment, and to send the "gang of four" to diplomatic posts abroad. However, the Soviets only agreed to send Sarwari as Afghanistan ambassador to Mongolia. Karmal appointed his supporters to key posts in the government, including prime minister, the Revolutionary Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the state intelligence agency, KAM, which was renamed *Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Information Service [KHAD]), and the *Khalqis* remained subordinated to them. Although *Khalq* member Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoi was in charge of the Ministry of the Interior, which controlled the police forces, he did not pose an immediate threat. To maintain control over government departments, KHAD opened offices in each province and ministry monitoring state employees, ministers, and governors. KHAD staff increased from 700 in January 1980 to 16,650 in 1982, with 56 percent of the staff recruited from the party and 28 percent from the Democratic Youth Organization; they received training in the Soviet Union and centers in Kabul. There were some 9,500 informants working for KHAD.⁶⁴

Karmal declared a general amnesty, freed political prisoners, and worked to win support of *Khalqis* loyal to Taraki by trying those officers who murdered Taraki. The regime imprisoned people who opposed and fought the Soviet occupation and denied them access to basic facilities in prison. However, *Khalqi* inmates with close ties to Amin, and responsible for the murder of innocent people, received preferential treatment. In 1981 the regime initiated Soviet-style forced labor in the prison system. In the first year some thirty million afghani were earned from the sale of products made by inmates.

Karmal tried to improve relations with Iran and sent a letter to Iranian religious leader *Ayatollah* Rohullah Khomeini on January 12, 1980, congratulating him on the victory of the Iranian people in overthrowing the shah. In order to garner the support of the Shia Hazaras at home, Karmal appointed Sultan Ali Kishtmand, a Hazara member

of the party, as prime minister. These and other measures were not enough to win national and international support for the regime, and opposition to the Soviet occupation continued.

To counter the insurgency, the KGB divided Afghanistan into eight military zones and appointed senior PDPA members to head each zone and coordinate the policies of the party and state organizations. Russian advisors were given free reign to deal with the insurgency. The Soviets accused Pakistan of supporting the insurgency, and in retaliation the KGB launched operation Alamgir (Sword Bearing) on March 2, 1981, when several Pakistanis hijacked a Pakistan International Airline (PIA) plane during a flight from Karachi to Germany. The plane was permitted to land at Kabul Airport and the head of KHAD, Najibullah, met the hijackers, who demanded the release of Murtaza Bhutto and his men from prisons in Pakistan and discussed strategies to fight Pakistani leaders. KHAD provided the hijackers with US\$4,500, explosive devices, and three Kalashnikovs (assault rifles) with ammunition. After Pakistan's leader General Zia al-Haq appealed to Brezhnev the plane was allowed to fly to Libya, where the Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi agreed to grant asylum to the hijackers and allow the plane to return to Pakistan.⁶⁵

To fight the insurgency the Kabul regime established *Jabha-e-Milli-Padar Watan* (National Fatherland Front) in June 1981 and invited tribal leaders, intellectuals, clerics, peasants, and urbanites to join. Salih Mohammad Ziray, a *Khalq* member, was appointed its head. His failure to achieve the state objective of broad popular support caused the regime to, in 1985, appoint a nonparty member, Abdul Rahim Hatif, a merchant with close ties to Ziray, with the hope that he could rally the public, but he too failed to broaden the regime's base of support. Individuals who joined the front were largely those who lacked a social base of support or the means to leave the country and thus were compelled to collaborate with the puppet regime. The regime organized some ninety thousand tribal people, provided arms to about twenty thousand of them, and allocated forty-one million afghani for the purpose of rallying tribal people in support of the government. However, the regime's policies failed to win public support. In August 1980, people in Zadran, Paktiya, rebelled. Faiz Mohammad, minister of the borders and tribes, visited the region to meet his own tribesmen and seek their support for the regime, but he was murdered. The Kabul regime accused Mullah Jalaluddin of ignoring the tribal tradition of hospitality and of killing their envoy.⁶⁶ The regime also formed the Democratic Youth Organization, headed by Farid Mazdak, a Tajik from Kabul, and worked to recruit students from schools to support

the regime. Many of its members were sent to the Soviet Union and its bloc countries for political indoctrination.

A major initiative by the puppet regime was the promulgation of an interim constitution in April 1980 that contained sixty-eight articles. Article 4 recognized the ruling party as the main force guiding the country's political affairs. Article 11 stressed cooperation with the Soviet Union. Article 36 recognized the authority of the Revolutionary Council as the highest organ of state power. The regime recognized eight major ethnic communities: the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Baluchis, Nooristanis, and Pashayis, and allowed publications in a number of languages for these communities. The Ministry of the Borders and Tribes worked to win the support of tribal and ethnic communities. In 1987, to improve efficiency, it was divided into the Ministry of Nationalities and the Ministry of Border Affairs. However, this measure, like many others, proved to be counterproductive. Support only went to those who were members of the party, its sympathizers, or those whose vested interests were at stake.

In August 1981 the regime issued a decree that allotted religious institutions their lands and property and permitted Mullahs, clerics, and religious leaders to retain the *wagf* (income) or *zakat* (tax) they received from the public. It also established the Department of Islamic Affairs, which was upgraded to *Wizarat-e-Shuon-e-Islami wa Awqaf* (Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Endowments) in 1985—all these efforts were intended to demonstrate the Islamic character of the regime and depict the regime as a friend of the Muslims. The state imprisoned Mullahs who opposed the regime and the Soviet occupation and engaged Mullahs who supported the regime in mosques and other religious institutions. However, people despised the progovernment Mullahs and threatened them with death, causing many Mullahs to carry guns as a measure of protection, and government security guards were appointed to maintain security at religious institutions.

The Soviet backed-regime organized meetings of tribal communities from across the Durand Line and invited Pashtun leaders sympathetic to the Soviet Union. The meetings were highly publicized and resolutions were passed that condemned U.S. intervention in Afghanistan's politics and praised Soviet assistance in defending Afghanistan against attacks by its enemies from territories in Pakistan. The state's repressive policies forced many people to seek refuge in Pakistan and Iran, but the regime consistently denied the presence of refugees in neighboring countries. The number of refugees increased to the extent that in 1990 there were an estimated 3.2 million refugees in Pakistan and more than 2 million in Iran.

One of the major programs initiated by the puppet regime was the revision of educational materials to indoctrinate the younger generation in the Soviet Socialist consciousness. The state revamped the curriculum, printed textbooks in which the April 1978 coup was glorified, and focused on government services in the areas of social, cultural, and economic development. In the new textbook, religious instruction was downgraded and a political science course was added to the high school curriculum that introduced topics in Marxism-Leninism, the history of revolutionary movements, and Russian-Afghanistan friendship and cooperation. Russian professors were hired to teach at institutions of higher education. Student members of the party from high schools and colleges were sent to the army; their military service was a mandatory part of their education before they could receive their diplomas.

The growing anti-Soviet insurgency claimed the lives of scores of Soviet soldiers and drained Soviet resources. A KGB general reflected on Soviet involvement in the war: "Afghanistan is our Vietnam . . . We simply began by backing a friendly regime; sometimes using desperate measures and now we are bogged down in a war we cannot win and cannot abandon it."⁶⁷ The failure of Karmal to stabilize the country caused the Soviet leaders to remove him from leadership of the party on May 4, 1986, replacing him with Najibullah, head of KHAD. In November, Karmal was removed from his post as head of state and was exiled to Moscow.

Najibullah was born in 1947 and belonged to the Ahmadzai branch of the Ghilzai Pashtun tribe. After graduation from the Habibiya School, he studied medicine at Kabul University, graduating in 1975. He was despised by the *Khalq*—they regarded him as a ruthless man during his tenure as head of the country's intelligence agency, arresting and torturing individuals loyal to Taraki—and *Parcham* members loyal to Karmal regarded him as a traitor who betrayed Karmal. Najibullah upgraded the KHAD to the ministry level and renamed it *Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (Ministry of State Security [WAD]), with the intention of erasing the agency name's association with terror and murder from the public consciousness. However, changing the name did not help. A year later he declared a policy of national reconciliation, and on July 6, 1987, a law on political parties was passed that led to the reemergence of several semi-independent parties. Most of these parties had split from the PDPA in the past, but some now allied with the PDPA.⁶⁸ Former chancellor of Kabul University, Mohammad Asghar, a pro-Western intellectual, seized the opportunity, returned home, and formed *Ittihad-e-Milli Baray-e-Azadi wa Demokrasi*

(National Union for Freedom and Democracy). Although the state invited members of the *Afghan Millat* party to join them and promised government posts, they rejected the state's offer. In November 1987 Najibullah convened a *Loya Jirgah* to endorse the draft of the constitution. In it the country's name was changed from the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to the Republic of Afghanistan and the new political system was based on a parliament (composed of two chambers) and a multiparty system. Parliamentary elections were held on April 6–15, 1988, in regions that remained under the control of the state and a majority of seats were allocated to PDPA members in advance in order to consolidate the regime's hold on power.

The Kabul regime worked to keep the Salang Tunnel open, as it was the major route for shipping supplies to Kabul. A Russian general and Afghanistan's Defense Minister Shah Nawaz Tanai visited Panjshir to meet Ahmad Shah Masoud, commander of *Jamiat-e-Islami*. Masoud's men were in charge of the Salang area and concluded the Khenjan Treaty, which recognized the autonomy of northern provinces such as Badakhshan, Takhar, Qunduz, along with areas north and south of the Salang Tunnel and Panjshir. In return, Masoud agreed to provide security for the Salang Pass Road and the Russian forces fighting opponents of the Kabul regime in these areas. A Russian soldier reflected on Masoud's relationship with the Soviets: "It was said that when Yerennikov celebrated his birthday, Ahmad Shah went to visit him and took presents."⁶⁹

The Soviet occupation army conducted a brutal war that recognized no rules of military engagement. Russian war veterans reflected that killing an Afghan was considered to be an act of heroism. When a young Afghan boy shot at a Russian soldier with his old-fashioned musket, the Russians captured him and transferred him to the Ninth Company's commander, who "split the boy's skull with his rifle butt, killed the boy with one blow, without even getting up from his place. Our men really slaughtered the people."⁷⁰ During military offensives the Russians would clear out entire villages; Russian war veterans maintain that their officers often mislead them, stating the following: "The war was international aid to a nation that had gotten into great difficulty. Or if it wasn't in actual difficulty, at least its revolution was in danger. That is why the Soviet army was in Afghanistan. Now it seems to me that it was purely our defense ministry's interests that were involved. For example, at one stage our soldiers were testing a new weapon which the UN had prohibited . . . Afghanistan was made into a target practice range, which apparently was the original purpose of the whole war."⁷¹

Growing opposition to the Soviet occupation both inside and outside the Soviet Union and the inability of the Soviet occupation army to crush the U.S.-backed Islamic insurgency forced the Kremlin to withdraw its troops. They summoned the puppet leader Najibullah to Moscow and told him that he must be prepared to defend the regime without the Soviets. Moscow also supported UN mediation in resolving the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan; the two countries concluded the Geneva Accord on May 14, 1988, which was endorsed by the Soviet Union and the United States as international guarantors. The Russians suffered heavy casualties: an estimated 15,000 dead, 50,000 injured, of which 11,500 remained invalid, 330 missing in action, and 18 defectors. They began withdrawing troops on May 15, 1988, and the last Soviet regiment left the country in February 1989.

In the post-Soviet occupation, Najibullah initiated Soviet-style *perestroika* in attempt to expand his base of support. Changes included an end to Soviet socialism, replacement of the Russian language with the English and French languages in schools and colleges, and reintroduction of religious studies in the curriculum. The regime dismissed Prime Minister Kishtmand (1981–88) and replaced him with Mohammad Hasan Sharq in May 1988 and involved a few nonparty members, some with closer ties to ex-king Zahir, in the government. However, these measures did not gain broad public support, as Najibullah's regime remained isolated from the people and Islamic fundamentalists continued to fight the regime. Najibullah realized that he could not stabilize the country and he requested that ex-king Zahir return home, promising a power-sharing arrangement. Zahir's aides, particularly his son-in-law Abdul Wali, advised him against such a deal, and he refused the offer. Pakistan vehemently opposed Zahir's return, preferring that its man, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, head of *Hizb-e-Islami*, be installed as head of state. Najibullah appealed to a number of people in exile to participate in a power-sharing government, but they all declined the offer. His close aides and the Russian ambassador in Kabul flew to Baghdad via Russia to meet Gilani, one of the *Jihadi* leaders. Although Najibullah presented him with a generous cash gift, Gilani also declined the offer after he left Baghdad.⁷² In February 1989 Najibullah dismissed Prime Minister Sharq and again appointed Kishtmand to the post, with the intention of establishing unity in the party.

Former Soviet puppet leader Karmal and his supporters, who now claimed to be independent of Moscow, were not happy with Najibullah's politics of *perestroika*, and worked to undermine his authority.

Internal party war (*Khalq* versus *Parcham* and factional fighting within the *Parcham*) contributed to Najibullah's inability to consolidate power. Abdul Rashid Dostam was in charge of government militias and the army in the north, but he was estranged from Najibullah. To balance Dostam and reduce his power base, Najibullah appointed Dostam's archrival, Abdul Rasul, a graduate of the Army Academy, to be in charge of tribal militias in Balkh. As Abdul Rasul became powerful, he too ignored Kabul, and his cruelty gained him the nickname of *Beh-khuda* (one who does not fear God). Another individual with a similar cruel streak who became estranged from Kabul was Amanullah. It is said that when opposition forces killed his entire family Amanullah said to the people "*gilamam jamshud*" (my life is uprooted) and he then became known as *Gilamjam*.

Esmatullah Muslim, head of the progovernment forces in Qandahar, was in charge of maintaining the safety on the road from Spin Boldak, bordering Quetta, Pakistan, to Qandahar. Muslim wielded considerable power in the region, and like other militia leaders, he became rich by extorting money from state and private transports. It is reported that whenever he found young girls he would acquire them by threatening them and their parents. Later he would give them to his soldiers and find other girls. Jabbar, in Helmand, possessed a similar perverse character trait.⁷³ Such sociopathic behavior by progovernment tribal militia leaders and commanders who were bent on carving out their own territories and refused to obey orders from Kabul further contributed to a gradual erosion of Najibullah's authority.

The Kabul regime continued to receive military support from the Soviet Union, and in March 1989 it repulsed a major military offensive by the Islamic fundamentalists, who were pressured by Pakistan to seize Jalalabad and establish a base for the Afghanistan Interim Government (AIG) to gain needed legitimacy, but they suffered a fatal blow, losing an estimated one thousand men, with several thousand wounded. The Shia Islamic parties were not involved in the Jalalabad battle, as they were excluded from the AIG.

Growing differences between the *Parcham* and *Khalq* weakened the regime's ability to fight the Islamic fundamentalists. *Khalq* continued to harbor grudges against *Parcham*, and on March 6, 1990, Tanai, minister of defense, in alliance with Hikmatyar, head of *Hizb-e-Islami*, attacked the presidential palace and other key government installations from the Bagram military airbase. After Tanai was defeated, he and some of his men got a helicopter and flew to Parachinar, Pakistan, further reducing the role of the *Khalqi* in the government.

Discontented elements within and outside the ruling party criticized the government's approach to the crisis. Non-Pashtun members of the party complained about the lack of democracy in the party and the domination of the party by the Pashtuns. To placate the regime's opponents, Najibullah amended the constitution and changed the name of the ruling party to *Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party) and removed Prime Minister Kistmand, replacing him with Fazl Haq Khaliqyar in May 1990. However, these efforts did not end the war or help the regime expand its social base of support, as the Islamic insurgency continued to fight the regime.

The struggle for power in Moscow between hardliners and reformers in early 1991 impacted political developments in Afghanistan as the client groups—the *Parcham* and *Khalq*—looked to their patrons in Russia for support. Karmal left Moscow and returned to Afghanistan. His decision to return may have been a strategic contingency plan on the part of the new Russian elite, who tried to overthrow Gorbachev and restore the old system of leadership; Najibullah was regarded as a Gorbachev protégée. Karmal was greeted by his loyalists in Kabul, who thought that he could expedite the process of change. Najibullah placed Karmal and his half-brother Baryalai under house arrest and dismissed Baryalai from his post as deputy prime minister. Karmal and his supporters could not overtly challenge Najibullah, but they tacitly encouraged progovernment tribal militia leaders to oust him. Growing disenchantment with the PDPA hastened the collapse of the regime when the *Parchamis* in both the civil service and in the army allied with Ahmad Shah Masoud and the *Khalqis* allied with the Pashtuns in the south and Hikmatyar, and later with the Taliban.

Disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a major factor in the collapse of the client regime. Russia could no longer provide Kabul with financial, political, and military support. This forced Najibullah to endorse the UN-mediated solution transferring power to a coalition of Islamic parties. The UN plan failed, as Islamic fundamentalists seized Kabul on April 27, 1992. Karmal and some of his associates left Kabul and he settled in the small town of Hairatan in the northern area bordering Uzbekistan, where pro-Soviet forces were still in control of some of the provinces. Karmal went to Russia for medical treatment and died at the age of 67 in Moscow on December 1, 1996. His body was brought back to Afghanistan and buried in Hairatan. After the Taliban seized control of Balkh in 1998, unconfirmed rumors abounded that his opponents destroyed his grave. Najibullah sought refuge at the UN compound in Kabul after his opponents prevented him from leaving the country for India.

CHAPTER 4



STATE, IMPERIALISM, AND DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS

ISLAMIC INSURGENCY

Islam as a religion plays a central role in the daily lives of the people, defining Muslims' obligations to God, Allah, to members of the civil society, the *ummah*, to the family, and their relations with followers of other religions. After the death of its founder Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community divided into two main groups: Sunnis and Shias. The two groups subsequently developed different interpretations of the Quran and the prophet's works that suited their interests. The Sunnis believe that there is no divinely appointed interpreter of the Quran. They recognize two main sources of law (*sharia*) for individual and communal life: (1) the legislation contained in the Quran and (2) the prophet's responses in words and deeds to a wide range of events (*hadith*, pl. *ahadith*). The *sunna* treats these *ahadith* as paradigmatic for individual conduct and for the development of new laws by *ulama* (religious scholars), whose sincere and disciplined legal reasoning is known as *ijtihad*.

The Shia believe that the prophet appointed his cousin and son-in-law, Ali (and his descendants through his wife, Fatima), to succeed him as the *imam*, the divinely authorized interpreter of the Quran and leader of the community. They believe that the *imam* is infallible and without sin because he is endowed with divine knowledge to interpret the faith and guide believers in spiritual and worldly matters. Since the tenth century, in response to the *ghaybah* (concealment of their twelfth Imam), the Shia (more accurately, the *Ithna Ashariyyah* [Twelvers]) have been led by groups of religious scholars who later evolved into a hierarchical system. At the top of this system is a small group of scholars known as *ayatollah* (*ayat Allah* [sign

of God]). The *ayatollah* are regarded as the *Marja-e-Taqlid* (culmination of imitation) by devout followers; the level below them is the *Hojat al-Islam* or *Hujjat al-Islam* (proof of God), followed by various lesser lay clergy at lower levels of the hierarchy.

The political and social philosophy of senior Shia religious leaders such as Iranian-born cleric Abu al-Qasim al-Khui (1899–1992; based in the city of Najaf, Iraq) and Sayyed Rohallah Mosavi Khomeini (1902–89; of Iran) influenced the views of Shia religious leaders and *ulama* in Afghanistan.¹ Al-Khui maintained that the mission of *ulama* is to provide religious guidance and interpretation of Sharia law, and ascribed a nonpolitical role to the *ulama*. Khomeini, on the other hand, articulated a political role for the *ulama* and the need for the establishment of an Islamic state in order to enforce Islamic laws. Shia clerics from various parts of Afghanistan went to Iran and Iraq for further religious education. After their return home they established *madrasas* (religious schools) in the Shia settled regions.²

Sunnis also have *imams*, but their concept of *imam* differs fundamentally from the Shia concept in that the Sunni *imams* are not divinely appointed, but appointed or elected by community consensus. In the Sunni tradition, the *ulama* are popularly known by the title *Mawlawi*, and when they hold judicial office they are called *Qazi*. Some *ulama* graduated from the Abu Hanifa Theological School in Afghanistan and others received advanced religious education from institutions of higher education elsewhere in the Muslim world. *Ulama* hold prominent positions in government and academic institutions, while *Mullahs*, clerics with basic religious education, are in charge of leading prayers and teaching children the fundamentals of the Islamic faith.

Sunni and Shia religious leaders and *ulama* regard themselves as the sole custodians of religion with the qualifications and authority to interpret the *Quran* (whose Arabic language is foreign to the people). They do not allow people to read translations of the Quran or say the five daily prayers in their own language. For some followers, not being able to read the *Quran* in their own language has hindered their understanding of Islam, their position in it, and their obligations to God and society. They have been forced to rely on others to interpret the scripture for them.

The Muslim community is not a homogenous society. Muslims differ in their political, social, and cultural orientations, including views on fundamental human rights and gender issues. Although a significant number of Muslims are religious in their private lives,

they believe in separation of religion and politics, regarding religion as a personal means of connecting to God. Disparity of wealth in the Muslim world has divided Muslims in the political realm as to what type of government system best serves their interests. Islamic activists agitating for the transformation of social, cultural, and political institutions may be categorized into three major groups: traditionalists, modernists, and fundamentalists. The traditionalists are conservative in their interpretation of the faith. They view local beliefs and practices as vital parts of the religion. They support tolerance and moderation with regard to interfaith dialogue, and while they support education, they try to preserve the traditional cultural values of their society. The modernists maintain that if the Islamic doctrine is accurately interpreted it is compatible with modernity. They call upon Muslims to abandon dogmatic interpretations of the faith and adjust human constructs to the requirements and conditions of the modern era. The fundamentalists adhere to a strict interpretation of religious scripture and the *hadith*. They do not believe in separation of religion and politics, fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state. They regard modernity as incompatible with Islamic ethos and reject the views of traditionalists who believe that leaders must come from among the Islamic religious scholars. They maintain that any individual with a knowledge of Islamic law and ethical qualities based on the Islamic ethos can become a leader; they view the state as a committee made up of pious men working as servants of God.

Islam has played a critical role in mobilizing Muslims in defense of their homeland whenever alien forces have invaded or whenever they believe that their way of life is compromised by corrupt administrators or despotic rulers, rebelling in order to reestablish a just system of governance. Islamic resistance to Western imperial powers dates back to the British invasion of Afghanistan in the early nineteenth century, producing three Anglo-Afghan wars. People opposed the alien domination of their homeland and did not submit to rulers either installed or supported by imperial powers. In the postindependence period, the Islamic movement became divided on how to deal with the growing influence of socialism, communism, and other liberal and democratic political discourses. Conservative religious leaders, scholars, and clerics defended the status quo because they were part of the established power structure. However, progressive and enlightened clerics and *ulama* decried the ossification of knowledge and opposed despotic rulers, believing that the system of governance was not based on Islamic teachings.

Politically motivated Islamic opposition to the authoritarian system of governance began in 1951 when Sayed Ismail Balkhi, a Shia cleric of *Sayyed* background (a *Sayyed* is someone who traces his lineage to the prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, through his wife, Fatima, the prophet's daughter), formed a secret political organization, *Mujtami-e-Islami* (Islamic Association), that later was renamed *Hizb-e-Ershad* (Party of Guidance), to fight for restoration of a just system of government. The group aimed to topple the monarchy through an armed insurrection to be carried out on the eve of the anniversary of the country's New Year, March 21. However, one of its members, Guljan Wardak, betrayed them and informed government officials about the planned insurrection. The state arrested Balkhi and his associates, Khaja Mohammad Naim, security chief of Kabul and a well-known Hazara leader of rebellions, Mohammad Ibrahim (known as *Gaw Sawar* [Cowboy]), Mir Ali Ahmad Gawhar, a Shia religious leader from Ghorband, Mohammad Aslam from Jaghatu, Qurban Nazar, an army officer in Andkhoy, and Mohammad Ismail, a member of Parliament from the Turkmen Parsa Valley, Parwan.

Balkhi espoused radical Islamic politics and believed that restoration of Islam was the only solution to sociopolitical issues. As a Shia religious leader, Balkhi did not reflect on how existing political systems subjected the Shia, Sunni, and Ismaili Hazaras to oppressive rules and deprived them of their rights and equality. He worked to subsume the Hazara's struggle for societal justice into the mainstream Shia movement, a deliberate attempt to ensure continuation of Sayyed rule over the Hazaras. Balkhi exhorted Islamic militancy in his writings:

O Youth! The pen doesn't have healing power
 The cure for the pain of oppression is blood
 Write on the walls of oppression with blood
 The flood that destroys its foundation is blood.³

Balkhi regarded the Jews as the main source of tension within and outside the Muslim world and regarded Adolph Hitler as a great leader who became unpopular because of the policies of the British and French who were major conspirators and enemies of the people worldwide.⁴ After Balkhi was released from prison he visited Iraq and Iran. He died shortly after his return home in 1963. Prior to his death, Balkhi and his colleagues reorganized themselves and formed a new political party, *Paiman-e-Islami* (Islamic Treaty), with Mir Ali Ahmad Gawhar as head of the party.

In the 1960s militant Islamic movements focused exclusively on countering the widespread influence of radical socialist discourse among intellectuals, students, workers, and other disenchanted social strata. Radical Islamic students were dismayed with traditional religious leaders and *ulama* who believed in the separation of religion and politics: "Let God do his work and the king do his work." Instead, they wanted to merge religion and politics to create a new force capable of fighting for the restoration of the Islamic way of life. Islamic fundamentalist views were being disseminated through papers such as *Gahiz* (Morning), *Neda-e-Haq* (Voice of Truth), and *Afkar-e-Naw* (New Thought). Prominent figures in the Islamic movement included Burhanuddin Rabbani, Abdulrab Rasul Sayyaf, Menhajuddin Gahiz, Ghulam Mohammad Niazi, and Mohammad Musa Tawana (who died on July 19, 2006). Niazi, Rabbani, and Sayyaf studied at Al-Azhar University in Egypt and their political and religious views were largely shaped and influenced by the writings of Sayed Qutb and Hasan al-Bana (who founded the Islamic organization *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* [Islamic Brotherhood] in Egypt). Upon their return home they propagated and taught the political philosophy of their Egyptian mentors at colleges and universities.

Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman (Islamic Youth Organization), which became known as *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, was formed with the sole objective of countering the growing radical and revolutionary movements. Niazi, dean of the College of Islamic Law at Kabul University, was chairman of the organization, but senior members of the organization later appointed Rabbani as head of the group. Rank-and-file members of the organization concentrated their activities on students in schools and institutions of higher education. The organization was renamed *Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Society of Afghanistan) in 1967, with the stated objective of curbing growing political agitation by radicals, who were espousing socialism and communism.⁵ A power struggle within the organization soon led to a split. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a student at the College of Engineering at Kabul University, formed *Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Party of Afghanistan). Although Shia students at colleges and universities were members of *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman*, they broke off ties with the organization because of ideological differences after it established links with *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Pakistan, headed by Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903–79). Mawdudi maintained that without Sharia law Muslim society cannot be Islamic, and he agitated for the establishment of an Islamic state based on three principles of Islam: *tawhid* (the oneness of God), *risala* (the message), and *khalifa*

(caliphate). The Shia inclined toward supporting the politics and religious views of two prominent Shia religious figures, Khomeini and al-Khui, while a small group adhered to the views of well-known Iranian scholar Ali Shariati.

The Islamic movement objected to secular education, particularly education for girls, and decried women's freedom and their work outside the home, as well as women's engagement in political activities. In April 1970 clerics and religious students from a number of provinces gathered at the Pol-e-Khishti mosque in Kabul, where they denounced secularization and modernization policies and the failure of the government to curb cultural and political activities they deemed to be anti-Islamic. They submitted a petition to the *Shura-e-Milli* (National Assembly) that included a demand to ban imported films such as *Yousuf-Zuleikha*, a dramatic love story of a young man named Yousuf and a woman named Zuleikha, based on a celebrated Quran story. The clerics regarded these shows as blasphemy and an affront to Islamic values. Their demands also included closing down plants that produced alcohol and a ban on publications that promoted atheism. An Islamic fundamentalist also threw acid on women during a protest rally in Kabul that caused many to sustain serious injuries. In October 1970 a man from Herat, Gul Mohammad, physically assaulted women, seriously injuring them. When he was arrested he showed no remorse and stated that he would do it again if he was released.⁶ To propagate Islamic ideology, members of the Islamic movement not only held meetings and rallies but also organized action groups to fight their political opponents. In a confrontation with supporters of the pro-Soviet *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e Afghanistan* (Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]) in Herat in 1971, religious students stabbed to death Abdul Qadir, a member of the *Khalq* faction of the PDPA, and in October 1972 Mullah Mirzada, a graduate of the India-based Deoband School, rallied people and religious students in Miterlam, Laghman Province, to protest against anti-Islamic activities. During a melee that broke out, Islamic fundamentalists murdered Abdul Rahman, a civil service officer and a member of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA. This incident caused pro-Soviet supporters to stage a demonstration in Kabul condemning clerics as imperialist agents.

The Islamic organizations opposed the anniversary of May Day (International Workers' Day), celebrated by radical and Socialist groups, and did not support the struggle of blue-collar workers for higher wages and better living conditions. They opposed Socialist-oriented programs and found a common political platform with the

United States—fighting communism and reducing Soviet influence. They tried to persuade U.S. officials working in Afghanistan to provide them with financial and political support to enable them to fight growing Communist activities. In January 1972 a member of the group, using the alias Merajuddin Zaheb (also known as Faruq), met the U.S. ambassador in Kabul. In subsequent meetings he told the ambassador the following:

Would the United States, in recognition of the valuable services against the USSR and communism his group is rendering, consider financing a printing press? He explained that the group did not have enough money to finance a newspaper and that they normally were confined to distributing typed or mimeographed leaflets . . . He concluded that the US should cooperate with his group, since both true Muslims and Americans had a common interest in fighting an ideology so diametrically opposed to our way of life . . . As he was leaving the house he said . . . the Muslim Youth had the weapons to fight the Russians. As proof he pulled an automatic pistol (about 25 cal.) from his belt, smiled, and waved it for me to see . . . He said that his group had killed four leftists in Miterlam last fall and that several also died in fighting at the University about the same time.⁷

During the republican regime of Mohammad Daoud (1973–78), political parties were banned, a move that drove them underground. In May 1974 Daoud suppressed the Islamic movement and arrested Niazi and a number of his associates (Niazi was executed after the pro-Soviets seized power in April 1978). When the police tried to arrest Rabbani, he escaped and fled to Pakistan. Rabbani's associate Ahmad Shah Masoud and several other party members, including his political rival Hikmatyar, also fled to Pakistan, where the Pakistani leadership welcomed them, provided them with assets to organize a rebellion against Kabul, and used them for subsequent anti-Kabul propaganda. They received military training under the supervision of Nasrullah Babar, head of the paramilitary frontier corps, who later was appointed governor of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Babar claimed that he had cultivated good working relations with exiled leaders of the Islamic movement of Afghanistan, including Rabbani, Masoud, and Hikmatyar.⁸ Pro-Soviet Pakistani political parties, such as *Hizb-e-Awami* led by Abdul Wali Khan, who had cultivated closer ties with Kabul opposed the activities of Afghanistan's Islamic organizations in the territories of Pakistan, but the Islamic parties of Pakistan, such as *Jamaat-e-Islami*, supported their Afghan counterparts.

Islamic fundamentalists and conservative religious leaders regarded Daoud's pro-Soviet policies as a threat to their vested interests and the traditional Islamic way of life, and they were determined to confront him. With the support of Pakistan they decided to organize armed insurrections to topple the Daoud regime. On July 21, 1975 they launched an offensive on government institutions in Surkhrud, Nangarhar but they were defeated. On July 28 they launched an attack on government offices in Panjshir and seized control until government forces crushed the uprising. In Kabul they destroyed power lines at night during the country's independence anniversary, plunging the city into total darkness for a few hours. This act failed to mobilize people in support of the movement's political agenda. The state arrested scores of people associated with the Islamic movement and executed three of its ringleaders. Although Islamic fundamentalists failed to overthrow Daoud, they sent a clear message to him of their intent to oppose him and fight to restore an Islamic system of governance.

The failure of the Islamic fundamentalists did not deter other Islamic groups from opposing and fighting Daoud's regime. The Islamic movement under the leadership of General Mir Ahmad Shah Rizwani organized a coup, but it failed when the state preempted the coup and arrested fifty of his associates on December 9, 1976. Rizwani was executed when the pro-Soviets seized power in 1978; those who survived and were freed left the country and settled in Pakistan. But the Islamic groups remained divided: Sunni and Shia leaders viewed each other with suspicion, each group regarding the other as traitors who leaked information about the coup that led to its failure and the arrest of their leaders. The Sunnis established their headquarters in Peshawar, Pakistan, and the Shias established theirs in Quetta, Pakistan, where a significant number of Shia Hazaras were exiled by King Abd al-Rahman in the early nineteenth century. Exiled leaders of the Islamic movement failed to resolve their ideological and political differences and were unable to unite in a common struggle against Daoud's regime or its successor state headed by Noor Mohammad Taraki.

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

State coercive policies under Taraki and his successor, Hafizullah Amin, caused a wide spectrum of the society—landowners, businessmen, peasants, and intellectuals—to fight the pro-Soviet government. Lack of a revolutionary organization to lead the popular uprising

provided opportunities for Sunni and Shia Islamic fundamentalists to step in using religion as a means of inciting the sentiment of the people to fight the regime. Mounting public opposition caused the regime to declare a war on religious leaders, nationalists, and radical intellectuals on the grounds that they were enemies of the regime, and state security agents arrested people suspected of antistate activities.

Armed struggle against the regime began in the countryside, where government institutions were weak and the mountains and valleys provided insurgents with shelter against military attacks. In Herat Province the regime monitored the activities of religious leaders and clerics and on March 5, 1979, arrested a number of religious leaders and executed them. After the news of the executions spread throughout the city, people mobilized to fight the regime. They rejected social, political, and land reforms, particularly reforms related to women's education; when party members forced men to send their women and girls to literacy classes it resulted in a major uprising on March 16, 1979. To restore stability the government deployed soldiers equipped with tanks and mechanized weaponry. The insurgents remained defiant and killed scores of state and party officials as well as fifty Soviet advisors working on different projects in the city; many of these individuals were skinned alive. The government decision to use the army against defenseless people caused disenchantment among nonparty army officers of the Seventeenth Division and they sided with the rebels. The rebellious army officers killed scores of progovernment officers, causing the governor, the provincial army chief, and Russian advisors to flee to the military air base in Shindand, which was still under government control. The rebels also seized control of the ammunition depot and distributed its contents among the people. The victory in Herat encouraged people in neighboring districts such as Kushk, Adraskan, and Obeh, as they too attacked state installations and killed progovernment officials. For three days the people maintained control of Herat, causing the regime to panic.

Taraki, head of the party and state, asked Soviet leaders for military support. When they objected to his demands and asked for further explanation he begged that they deploy non-Russian ethnic soldiers to Afghanistan to crush the uprising. In a telephone conversation Taraki appealed to Kosygin, saying "What we want [is] Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen to be sent to us because they can drive tanks and besides all these peoples live in Afghanistan too. Let them wear Afghan clothes, Afghan badges and then nobody will recognize them as foreigners. We think this is very easily done. Judging by the examples of Iran and Pakistan we see that it is easy to do."⁹

The government deployed reinforcements to the region, and fighter planes from Kabul and the Soviet central Asian territories bombed residential areas in and around the city. There are no precise data on the number of people killed during the uprising; the number is widely believed to be several thousand. After defeating the insurgency the state arrested those whom it suspected of having a hand in the rebellion and executed them. This violent uprising caused the Soviets to order Russian families working outside Kabul to return home. Although the government crushed the resistance, it did not deter people elsewhere from fighting the regime. In March 1979 people in Kunar attacked government forces in the districts of Asmar and Barikoot, but they were defeated when the state bombed villages, killing scores of men, women, and children.

The state's ruthless response did not deter the people from defending their freedom and liberty. The people in Paktiya rebelled, disarmed an army garrison, and seized its munitions, but the regime deployed its forces and crushed the uprising. Antistate rebellion also jolted the regime in the capital city, Kabul, when the Shia Hazara and Qizilbash residents of the Chindawool ghetto rebelled on June 23, 1979. This incident occurred after the state arrested a number of Shia leaders, influential figures, and intellectuals and executed them. People attacked several police posts in the Jada-e-Maiwand (Maiwand Street), raising Islamic flags and shouting antigovernment epithets. The uprising started at ten in the morning and lasted for a few hours until the state cordoned off the area from Pol-e-Harten to Pol-e-Mahmood Khan and Pol-e-Bagh-e-Omuni. Paramilitary forces were deployed on both sides of Maiwand Street and eventually suppressed the uprising, killing scores of people and arresting many others. Late that night state security conducted a house-to-house search and arrested an estimated two thousand Hazaras suspected of having a hand in the rebellion. The state's repressive policies caused many people to flee to Hazarajat, in the central part of the country, as well as to Iran and Pakistan.

During these spontaneous public uprisings several Sunni *tanzim* (resistance groups) were formed, but they remained divided, and efforts by Pakistan and the United States to unite them only led to temporary alliances that soon dissolved as new factions emerged. Each *tanzim* mobilized people along ethnic and tribal lines, although they adhered to Islamic unity. Prominent *tanzims* that became part of *Grub-e-haftganah* (Alliance of Seven) are listed in Table 4.1.

After the Soviet occupation the *tanzims* improved their organizational capabilities with training and funds from the West and

Table 4.1 Major Sunni political parties in the 1980s and 1990s

Organization	Head
<i>Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan)	Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi
<i>Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Party of Afghanistan)	Gulbuddin Hikmatyar
<i>Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Party of Afghanistan; split from Hikmatyar's party)	Mohammad Yunus Khalis, died on July 19, 2006, at age 87 and was succeeded by his son Anwar al-Haq.
<i>Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahidin)	Abdulrab Rasul Sayyaf
<i>Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan</i> (National Salvation Front of Afghanistan)	Sebghatullah Mojaddadi
<i>Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Society of Afghanistan)	Burhanuddin Rabbani
<i>Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan)	Sayed Ahmad Gilani

from conservative Islamic countries in the Middle East. The *tanzims* are divided into three main categories: traditionalist, modernist, and fundamentalist.

The traditionalists include former religious leaders such as Sebghatullah Mojaddadi and Sayed Ahmad Gilani, who come mainly from upper-middle-class families. They are in charge of religious affairs and also run private business and religious endowment institutions. For instance, Mojaddadi belongs to the *Naqshbandiyya* Sufi order and has followers among the Pashtuns in Pakiya and Kunar Provinces, and Gilani belongs to the *Qadiriyya* Sufi order and is an hereditary head of the community and his followers are mainly Pashtuns in the eastern provinces. Prior to the Soviet invasion Gilani was the proprietor of a Peugeot automobile dealership: "His family's inter-marriage with the ruling Kabul elites, his personal wealth, and generally Western orientation have earned him a reputation that attracts former bureaucrats to his side, makes him more acceptable to the United States, and in the opinion of some, renders him a better candidate to compromise with the Soviet government on the restoration of an independent Afghanistan . . . Gilani apparently views the former monarch as capable of

attracting segments of the peasantry within the country, the refugees and moderate Islamic countries to his Islamic alliance camp.”¹⁰

The modernist Islamic organizations failed to establish their leadership in the national liberation movement because they did not have grassroots support in rural and urban areas. Conservatives and traditionalists could not relate to their sociopolitical and cultural policies and their stated agendas were not compatible with the policies of Pakistan, which lent support to the Islamic fundamentalists. Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence agency (ISI) favored Hikmatyar’s *Hizb-e-Islami* and distributed the bulk of military and humanitarian assistance to that organization, enabling Hikmatyar to establish his domination in the refugee camps and in the aid distribution centers. It is for this reason that refugees viewed *Hizb-e-Islami* as a route to aid money, causing many to join the party.

Gulbuddin Hikmatyar grew up in Khanabad when the state, under Loy Khan, governor of Qataghan and Badakhshan, had settled a significant number of Pashtuns in the northern region of the country. Hikmatyar completed his elementary schooling there, attended the military school in Kabul, and after he was dismissed from the military school, attended Shir Khan High School. He was admitted to the College of Engineering at Kabul University and was arrested and incarcerated on criminal charges while a sophomore. He fled to Pakistan after he was freed. Hikmatyar’s main ideological thrust is the establishment of a government based on Sharia law and the incompatibility of Islam with the Western concept of democracy, stating that *Sharia* law should be enacted to curb adultery, drunkenness, gambling, obscenity, and moral corruption, producing an Islamic system that improves social life and promotes healthy relationships among people based on Islamic teachings and eliminates the system under which men and women are allowed to work together.¹¹

In a similar vein *Jamiat-e-Islami* emphasized strict adherence to Sharia law and argued that the role of an Islamic state is to reconcile antagonistic classes under the banner of Islam, as opposed to the class struggle espoused by revolutionaries. *Jamiat-e-Islami* stated that “Establishment of [an] Islamic system forms our main obligation and our sacred aim . . . *Jamiat* wants to improve relations between the owner of the land and farmer, employer and employee in such a way that instead of fighting against each other they live in a cooperative atmosphere.”¹²

Another well-known fundamentalist is Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, head of *Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*, who has been active in the Islamic movement since the 1950s. He was elected

as a representative from Logar to the National Assembly in 1965 and supported and allied with the Taliban in 1995. Abdulrab Rasul Sayyaf, a Sunni Pashtun from Paghman, has been active in the Islamic movement since the mid-1960s. He was imprisoned after pro-Soviet forces seized power in 1978. He was freed after the Soviet invasion and fled to Pakistan.

Islamic fundamentalists forged closer ties with the Wahabis and conservative Arab states and have received substantial financial support from them. When the Organization of the Islamic Conference, an alliance of governments of Islamic countries, held a summit in the city of Taif, Saudi Arabia, to condemn the Soviet occupation, a member of the Saudi ruling family, Turki al-Faisal, director of the Saudi Intelligence Department, invited several leaders of the Islamic fundamentalist parties and assigned Chief of Staff Ahmed Badeeb to select one of them to deliver a speech:

Several Afghan rebel leaders spoke passable Arabic, but Badeeb found that Sayyaf, then an assistant to another leader, was by far the most fluent and effective. "We chose him to give the speech," Badeeb recalled later. Immediately, however, the Afghan leaders began to "fight among themselves. Unbelievable guys . . . Everyone was claiming that he represents the Afghans and he should give the speech." The scene became so unruly that Badeeb decided to lock all of them in a Taif prison until they agreed on a single speaker. After six hours of jailhouse debate, the Afghans accepted Sayyaf. Badeeb then decided that his client needed a better stage name. As he recalled it, Sayyaf had been introduced to him as "Abdul Rasul Sayyaf." The first two names, he said, translated to Saudis as "Slaves of the Prophet," suggesting that Sayyaf's ancestors had been indentured servants. Adding "Abdulrab" to the name Badeeb altered its meaning to "Slave of the God of the Prophet," suggesting religious devotion, not low social status. For years Badeeb was proud that Saudi intelligence had literally given Sayyaf his name.¹³

The political platform of the Islamic fundamentalists has not significantly changed since the 1960s and does not address the issue of political autonomy for national minorities or gender equality. Women have been involved in the public domain since the post-World War II period and more women were employed in various developmental projects in the 1960s and afterwards. During the constitutional monarchy upper- and middle-class women were cabinet members, representatives in the National Assembly, and employed in the army and police departments. The misogynic policies and practices of the Islamic fundamentalists and their failure to recognize women's role

in socioeconomic development are major reasons that women despise them and do not become members; only the wives of party members and their close friends and sympathizers willingly or reluctantly supported these parties.

During the Soviet occupation, leaders of the Islamic parties failed to resolve their differences and coordinate their struggle against the Soviet-backed government. Many instances have been recorded where they fought among themselves and against rival groups. For example, a copy of a document by *Hizb-e-Islami* seized by a rival group indicates that the party not only opposed other Islamic parties but also endorsed collaboration with the Soviets to eliminate rival parties from gaining strength. *Hizb-e-Islami* instructed its men that while they fight the Russians they must also work to eliminate rival Islamic parties, as this would enhance the status of *Hizb-e-Islami* as the most powerful party fighting the Russians. In places where *Hizb-e-Islami* could not challenge rival Islamic groups they were to inform the Russians or the government to take action against them.¹⁴

In the 1970s radical Shias that broke off ties with *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman* because of ideological and political differences among their senior leaders formed their own organizations. The only thing these organizations had in common with their Sunni counterparts was their belief in the restoration of Sharia law, albeit a different interpretation of the law. The political, social, and religious views of Shia organizations were largely shaped by the views of radical Shia religious leaders and scholars in Iran and Iraq. Although a number of organizations were formed, their influence remained limited in the political arena. *Rohaniyat-e-Nawin* (neoclericalism) worked to redefine the political-religious role of clerics. It was later renamed *Hizb-e-Husaini*, with the intended objective of initiating reforms in the leadership structure and replacing the *ulama* in charge of *madrasas* with radicalized younger *ulama* advocating establishment of an Islamic state. However, ideological differences among the leaders of these nascent groups prevented them from uniting until the late 1980s. The Shias of Afghanistan welcomed the Iranian revolution that forced Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to leave Iran on January 16, 1979. Khomeini's return to Iran at the end of the month ushered in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They regarded the cleric-led revolution in Iran as their own and celebrated the occasion as a triumph of Shia rule. In Hazarajat they displaying Khomeini's portrait over the doorways of their mud houses, markets, and restaurants, as well as in public buildings.

Shia reaction to the socioeconomic reforms and rigid policies of the pro-Soviet regime began in early 1979. Radical Islamists associated with various religious organizations exploited the situation to their advantage and mobilized people against the regime. By June they had liberated most parts of Hazarajat from government control, however, they remained bitterly divided among themselves. To coordinate the struggle against the Kabul regime, a grand meeting was convened in Waras, Bamiyan, in September 1979 that was attended by tribal chiefs, religious leaders, clerics, and intellectuals. This meeting led to the formation of *Shura-e-Enqilabi-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Council for the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan; hereafter referred to as *Shura*). Participants selected Sayed Ali Bihishti as head of the *Shura*, Husain Nasiri as his deputy, and Mohammad Akbari, from Waras, as chief military commander. He was replaced by Colonel Sayed Mohammad Hasan, known as Sayed Jaglan, in 1980. The *Shura* established a military commission to oversee military operations on three major fronts: the Ghazni Front was under the control of Colonel Hasan, the front in Behsud, Wardak, was under the control of Arbab Gharibdad, and the front in the Turkmen Parsa Valley in Parwan remained under the control of Haji Nadir Allahdad. The *Shura*'s other commissions included judiciary, health, education, and finance, and they agreed to involve Hazaras of radical secular backgrounds from each district in their central committee.

Ulama were a major force in the *Shura*, stressing the role of religion in guiding the *Shura*'s activities. Traditional tribal leaders—*Mirs*, *Khans*, and *Arbabs*—who in the past represented their people to government agencies, favored a secular approach. Radical Hazara intellectuals who espoused revolutionary discourse shared the views of the traditional tribal leaders. The selection of Bihishti as head of the *Shura* was a compromise solution to safeguard the interests of contending groups. A prominent Hazara tribal chief, Mohammad Hussain Shahi, of Waras, was the main force behind organizing the meeting and supporting Bihishti's leadership, as he believed that Bihishti, who remained dependent on him for donations, would help him retain his influence in the *Shura*. Bihishti studied in Iraq and upon his return home in 1963 he built a *madrasa* on land donated by Shahi and avoided local and national politics. His adherence to the teachings of the prominent Shia religious leader al-Khui—a nonpolitical approach—was more in tune with the views of the traditional tribal leaders and radical intellectuals.

The *Shura* divided Hazarajat into several administrative units, imposed taxes, issued identification cards, and required outsiders and

foreigners who wanted to travel to the region to secure letters of permission from the *Shura* leadership. The *Shura's* military structure was a loose alliance of several subregional commanders who had established their rule over the region prior to the formation of the *Shura*. The *Shura's* policy of sending commanders and men outside their home district was unpopular, as the local population was forced to provide them with accommodations, food, and other amenities. This created local resentment and local commanders used this to justify their own hold on power and call upon the leadership to withdraw the *Shura's* militias.

The *Shura* maintained that it represented the interest of Shia Hazaras who had been deprived of political equality and opposed ethnonationalist tendencies, regarding them as anathema to Islamic unity. The *Shura* established offices in Pakistan and Iran to maintain contact with the international community, but Pakistan did not recognize the *Shura* because they feared that it might incite and politicize the Shias of Pakistan. The United States regarded the Shias as agents of the Iranian regime and did not support them. Although Bihishti did not view Khomeini as the supreme religious leader, the *Shura* adopted slogans such as *Allah-o Akbar* (God is great) and *Khomeini and Bihishti Rahbar* (Khomeini and Bihishti are leaders). Radical *ulama*, who came mainly from the lower social strata of Hazara society and received religious education in Iran or were influenced by radical Shia theology, were not happy with Bihishti's leadership and domination of the *Shura* by conservative *ulama* (mainly individuals of *Sayyed* background who exploited their genealogical linkages to Prophet Muhammad's family to legitimize their privileged position in the Hazara community). They also regarded the traditional tribal chiefs as reactionaries. They quit as members of *Shura* with the intention of forming militant Islamic organizations of their own. For example, Sadiqi Neeli, of Daikundi, who represented Khomeini and initially served as the *Shura's* deputy head of the commission on *jihad*, was disenchanted with the *Shura*. He preached Islamic militancy and condemned the upper classes of the Hazara community for exploiting the poor and dispossessed. After the collapse of government institutions in Daikundi, he and his followers consolidated their leadership there.

Hazara nationalists were also dismayed with the *Shura's* conservative leadership and many left and settled in Quetta, Pakistan, forming their own organizations to promote the secular ethnic identity of the Hazara as opposed to the Islamic identity promoted by the *ulama*. *Ittihadia-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Association of Afghanistan *Mujahidin* [hereafter referred to as *Ittihadia*])

is one of the organizations that promoted Hazara nationalism and unity without considering their social and political ideologies. Although religious scholar Amin Fasihi led the group initially, he left the organization because of political differences and was replaced by former parliament member Abdul Hussain Maqsudi, of Nawoor, Ghazni. Hazara intellectuals, who advocated revolutionary politics and played a prominent role in the fight against the Kabul regime by overthrowing local government administrations, were disenchanted with the *Shura*. They found a common platform in the *Ittihadīya* and joined them. Radical *ulama* condemned the *Ittihadīya* as an organization that opposed Islamic revolution, attacking their bases in the Jaghori district of Ghazni.

Iran viewed the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as an opportunity to export their brand of Shia radicalism there, particularly in Hazarajat, where people were receptive to their religious and political ideas. In 1979 a number of pro-Iranian and radical clerics who had differences with the *Shura* leadership gathered in Iran to discuss the need for a new party. They invited Mohammad Asif Mohsini, a Shia from Qandahar who had settled in Syria, to come to Iran for the meeting. At the meeting they formed *Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* and selected Mohsini as head of the party. At first Iran supported Mohsini, but later withdrew their support for him and other traditional Shia leaders, closing Mohsini's office in Iran in August 1980. They then directed their support toward Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Sunni fundamentalist whose policies were identical to those in Iran. In Hazarajat, individuals associated with *Sayyeds* and tribal leaders in the *Shura* remained in charge of the resistance movement. Their policies and views conflicted with those of the Iranian leaders, causing Iran to create and support cliental political organizations that supported its policies. The pro-Iranian organization *Sazman-e-Nasr-e-Enqilab-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Victory Organization for Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan) was formed in 1979 with the objective of uniting the Shias, mobilizing them against the Kabul regime, and fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state. One of the prominent figures of the group was Abdul Ali Mazari, a cleric from Mazar, Balkh (he and the current supreme religious leader of Iran Mohammad Ali Khamenei were imprisoned in Iran during the shah's reign).

Iran sent a delegation to study the situation in Hazarajat and examine how *Sazman-e-Nasr* had used Iran's military and financial assistance. It was disappointed in their progress and endorsed the formation of another cliental organization, *Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Guardians of the Islamic *Jihad* of Afghanistan), in 1981. It was headed by Mohammad Akbari, a cleric from Waras who had broken off ties with the *Shura* and had established his leadership over Behsud, Wardak, and the

Turkmen Parsa Valley in Parwan with some support in Bamiyan. Political differences among radical Shia leaders led to the formation of several organizations, including *Hizbollah* (Party of God), *Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin* (Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed), *Hizb-e-Rad-e-Islami* (Islamic Thunder), and others. The only Shia Hazara group that promoted Hazara culture, history, and politics was *Shura-e-Farhangi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Cultural Council of Afghanistan), established in 1983 with its headquarters in Quetta, Pakistan.

The pro-Iranian radical Shia parties did not receive funding from Western and Middle Eastern countries as did their Sunni counterparts, relying exclusively on Iran for military, financial, and political support and adhering to the famous dictum of Khomeini: "Neither East nor West but Islam." They even defended Iran in its war against Iraq.

The political and social policies of the radical Shia groups did not differ significantly from those articulated by their Sunni counterparts. However, when ethnicity became a prominent theme in the political arena in the mid-1980s some Shia militants abandoned their dogmatic rhetoric and espoused Hazara nationalism. Radical *ulama* and commanders questioned the basis of *Sayyeds'* legitimacy as religious and political leaders. They inculcated a new political and social awareness among the Hazaras and rallied them in support of their political agendas, declaring that Hazaras could become political and religious leaders of their own community. In 1983 *Sazman-e-Nasr* and *Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami* challenged the *Shura's* leadership and authority in Hazarajat. By 1984 Bihishti was forced to leave Bamiyan and retreated to Ghazni, where his loyal commander Colonel Hasan still maintained his authority. From this point on, these and other Islamists engaged in an internecine struggle among themselves for control of Hazarajat and were distracted from their common struggle against the Kabul regime. Iran worked to unite the warring cliental organizations and, as a result, eight of the groups formed a coalition, *Shura-e-Itilaf-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan), in October 1987. It was renamed *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan; hereafter *Hizb-e-Wahdat*) in June 1990, with Abdul Ali Mazari as its head.

Hizb-e-Wahdat established its domination over the Hazara-settled regions, became a *de facto* government, and opened an office in Iran as well as offices in several European countries, although the European governments did not recognize them. To avoid being stigmatized as Iranian protégés by their Sunni counterparts and secular and nationalist organizations, Mazari distanced himself from Iran. Ethnicization of politics in the late 1980s was another factor that caused Mazari to abandon Shia orthodoxy and advocate Hazara nationalism. Although in the past

Mazari opposed Hazara intellectuals from revolutionary and nationalist backgrounds—his group and other Islamists even murdered a few such individuals—he reversed course and now supported the unity of Hazaras, irrespective of differences in their political ideologies. Mazari's espousal of narrow ethnic nationalism caused his supporters to call him *Baba-e-Hazara* (Father of the Hazaras). However, Sunni and Ismaili Hazaras neither supported Mazari nor joined his party; the Sunni Hazaras remained under the influence of Sunni political parties, while most Hazara Ismailis supported the Soviet-backed government. However, in regions where the Shia and Sunni insurgency established their rule, Ismailis were forced to submit to their rule. For example, in Shibar, Bamiyan, after the Ismaili-led revolutionary antistate front collapsed in the mid-1980s Ismailis were forced to follow Shia orders and contribute men and material to sustain the Shia-led insurgency. Intellectuals of Hazara, Tajik, Pashtun, and other ethnic communities who advocated revolutionary discourse and opposed both the Shia and Sunni fundamentalists as well as the Soviet occupation of the country were victimized by the fundamentalist parties in the process. There were more than thirty Shia political organizations. The prominent ones are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Major Shia Islamic parties in the 1980s and 1990s

Organization	Head/founder
<i>Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan)	Mohammad Asif Mohsini
<i>Hizb-e-Wahdat</i> (Unity Party)*	Abdul Ali Mazari
<i>Hizbollah</i> (Party of God)	Shaikh Yazdan Ali Wusoqi
<i>Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin</i> (Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed)	Joint Council
<i>Sazman-e-Nasr</i> (Victory Organization)	Joint Council
<i>Pasdar-e-Jihad-e-Islami</i> (Guardians of the Islamic Movement)	Mohammad Akbari
<i>Shura-e-Itifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan</i> (Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan)	Sayed Ali Bihishti

*Composed of an alliance of *Sazman-e-Nasr*, *Harakat-e-Islami*, *Pasdar-e-Jihad-e-Islami*, *Hizbollah*, *Dawat* (Invitation), *Nahzat* (Progress), *Nayro-e-Islam* (Islamic Strength), *Jabha-e-Mutahid* (United Front), *Shura-e-Itifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*, and *Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin*.

The Sunni Islamic parties regarded the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a political ploy by imperial powers, particularly the Soviet Union, intended to divide Islamic people. The Shia parties did not articulate their views on the issue, even though a significant number of Hazaras reside in Quetta, Pakistan. The Sunni and Shia Islamic parties remained divided not only along political lines but also on the issue of ethnicity; the Shias are mainly Hazaras. Harsh measures by the Sunni and Shia Islamic parties caused many people to despise them and oppose their policies and actions. Their rigid policies of Islamization ran counter to the interests of liberals and traditionalists, as well as the small number of non-Muslims—Hindu and Sikh residents of the country—who were forced to abide by their rulings.

SECULAR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The roots of secular revolutionary movements can be traced as far back as the establishment of the Socialist system in Russia in 1917. After Afghanistan gained its independence from the British in 1919 the Soviet leadership strengthened ties with Afghanistan, and in 1920 it established *Hizb-e-Adalat-e-Pars* (Pars Justice Party) and *Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Bokhara* (Communist Party of Bokhara) to propagate revolutionary politics among Turkic, Khiwa, and other ethnic groups from Afghanistan. *Kumita-e-Markazi-e Enqilabiyun-e-Afghanistan* (Central Committee of Afghan Revolutionaries [CCAR]) was based in Bokhara and was headed by Haji Mohammad Yaqub. The group postulated that the establishment of a republican order was in the best interest of Afghanistan. It agitated for the overthrow of the monarchy and asked the Soviets to help establish Red Brigades to fight for the implementation of their political objectives. The CCAR branch in Termiz was headed by Mohammad Ghafar. It had about fifty members who came mainly from the northern areas of Afghanistan, with a few members from Kabul. The only organization that was established inside the country was *Sazman-e-Radikalha-e-Chap-e-Afghani* (Revolutionary Organization of Afghan Leftists), with its headquarters in Herat. The organization was engaged in enlightenment activities that included programs such as provision of educational and cultural materials and efforts to enlist support within the army. The Soviets tried to unite the divided revolutionary groups, but their efforts were unsuccessful.¹⁵ Although these organizations had dissolved by 1921, revolutionary individuals continued to fight for political reforms and social justice.

Political repression served as fertile ground for the nurturing of radical antiestablishment discourse. However, the advocates of radical discourse did not gain influence in the country's politics until the late 1940s, when their efforts culminated in the formation of nationalist and progressive parties and the publication of private papers agitating for constitutional monarchy and social justice. Revolutionaries rose to prominence after the promulgation of the 1964 constitution, which permitted freedom of speech and of association, leading to the formation of political parties. The revolutionaries supported blue-collar workers and the peasantry in their struggle for higher wages and better living conditions in hopes of enlisting them in the cause of a neodemocratic revolution. Intellectuals who advocated a revolutionary transformation formed *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Mutaraqi* (Progressive Youth Organization [PYO]), which adhered to the political ideology of the Communist Party of China, headed by Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976). The PYO published a short-lived weekly paper, *Shula-e-Jawid*, in early 1968, but the government banned the paper because of its harsh criticism of the ruling class and its call for a peoples' revolution as the only solution to the worsening socioeconomic situation. The paper advocated Mao's concepts and principles of neodemocracy, which they believed were applicable to the situation in Afghanistan. The PYO supported national liberation struggles in the international arena and the right to self-determination of national minorities, encouraged support for developing similar movements inside Afghanistan, and condemned the nonviolent and evolutionary transitions to socialism espoused by the pro-Soviet party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Because of its adherence to revolutionary ideals, a large number of students and the rural and urban poor supported the organization and even became members.

Well-known individuals active in the organization included Dr. Abdul Rahim Mahmoodi, Dr. Hadi Mahmoodi, Akram Yari, Mohammad Osman, also known by the derogatory name *Landai* (dwarf), Sadiq Yari, and Wasif Bakhtari. A schoolteacher, Zahra, played a critical role in enlisting students and teachers in support of the organization in Mazar, Balkh; she was Osman's sister, and this family connection provided added credibility that helped her to enlist support for the organization. Akram Yari and his brother Sadiq Yari belonged to the Hazara ethnic community, and this encouraged a significant number of Hazara intellectuals to join the organization, a factor that caused some scholars and rival political parties to view PYO as an organization adhering to and promoting sectarianism. Others accused the organization of promoting regionalism, as it strongly condemned the

government's inequitable strategies for political and economic development that ignored development in peripheral regions, including Hazarajat, Nimrooz, and Badakhshan. Such portrayals of the organization are not accurate; members and supporters of the organization represented diverse ethnolinguistic and regional communities and some of its well-known figures came from Pashtun and Tajik backgrounds.

The constitutional period (1964–73) is regarded as an era of increased revolutionary struggle that was spearheaded by intellectuals advocating redistributive social justice. A major antistate rally occurred in Kabul on October 25, 1965, when the National Assembly was due to cast a vote of confidence on the cabinet of Prime Minister Mohammad Yousuf. A day earlier the assembly allowed a few male and female students to participate in the assembly's session. The next day, when more students decided to participate at the hearing, the assembly postponed its session on the grounds that it could not accommodate more students, escalating tensions among the students, representatives, and the government. The assembly proposed having a closed door session to resume their official business of the day. However, when Yousuf was on his way to the assembly, students blocked his way and complained to him about the assembly's decision to not let them participate in the hearing. Yousuf advised them to return to their classes and let the assembly decide the matter peacefully. The students were agitated and shouted at representatives as they entered the assembly building, calling them traitors and reactionaries. Police prevented the students from entering the building and ordered them to leave the area. Late in the afternoon students marched toward Yousuf's residence near the assembly building. General Abdul Wali, son-in-law of King Zahir and chief of staff of the army's central forces in Kabul, had promised that he would maintain the security of the assembly and stationed tanks and soldiers in the area. When the students reached Yousuf's residence the army fired on them, killing forty and injuring scores of others, but the government media reported that only three people had been killed.¹⁶ That day is known as *Sayum-e-Aqrab*, the name of the third day in the Islamic calendar. Revolutionaries as well as pro-Soviet reformists celebrated its anniversary by organizing rallies and giving speeches denouncing state policies until the monarchy was overthrown in 1973.

Sayum-e-Aqrab is regarded as the dawn of the revolutionary movement, as radical, pro-Soviet and other militant students intensified their political activities with the intention of disseminating revolutionary social and political awareness. They participated in worker and peasant strikes and celebrated the first day in May (International Workers' Day) by organizing meetings and rallies in the capital and major provincial

centers demanding better living conditions, higher wages, insurance, a reduction in the working hours, and so on. The number of blue-collar workers remained small because of the limited number of private and state-owned industrial complexes, thus their involvement in the struggle for change was limited to pay raises and better living and working conditions. Lacking trade and labor unions to defend the rights of the workers and represent their demands for higher economic and social compensation, demonstrations and strikes were the only means that the workers had express their grievances. The PYO regarded the pro-Soviets as saboteurs that worked to derail the working-class movement from its revolutionary course by advocating reconciliation and political compromise with the ruling classes. Table 4.3 provides a list of some of the workers' strikes.

A major strike by workers occurred on May 8, 1968, when about 350 workers of the petroleum and natural gas plant in Jawzjan went

Table 4.3 Chronology of worker strikes, 1968

Month	Strikes	Location
April	Workers of Kuhsar Construction Company	Kabul
May	Workers of Jangalak automotive maintenance repair plant	Kabul
	Workers of Government Printing Press, May 26	Kabul
	Government bus and truck drivers, May 28	Kabul
	Workers of Pol-e-Charkhi textile and bicycle assembly plants	Kabul
	Workers of Qandahar Woolen Mill, May 30	Qandahar
	Workers of Ghorī Cement Plant and Pol-e-Khumri	Baghlan
	Workers of Pol-e-Khumri textile plant, May 30	Baghlan
	Workers of petroleum and natural gas plant in Shibarghan	Jawzjan
	Workers of asphalt unit of Pol-e-Khumri-Shibarghan road project	Samangan
June	Workers of Education Press	Kabul
	Strike of Jangalak workers explodes into violence	Kabul
	Workers of Hajari-Najari plant, June 5 against German technicians	Kabul
	Workers at Jab al-Seraj	Parwan
	Workers of Gulbahar Textile Company	Parwan

Table 4.3 Chronology of worker strikes, 1968 (*cont.*)

Month	Strikes	Location
	Workers of Ghorī cement plant (second strike, June 4)	Baghlan
	Workers of Pol-e-Khumri textile plant (second strike, June 6)	Baghlan
	Workers of Qandahar Fruit Company (35 workers laid off)	Qandahar
	Workers of Spinzar Cotton Company, June 2–4	Qunduz
	Workers of Hazrat-e-Imam and Spinzar Company; peasants joined port workers at Bandar-e- Shirkhan on June 6	Qunduz
	Gold miners of Norabeh	Takhar

Source: Adapted from Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*. Oxford Pakistan Paperbacks (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 620.

on strike demanding pay raises and suitable accommodations (the Russians heavily invested in the exploration of gas and petroleum reserves and exported the gas to the Soviet Union). The workers walked more than two hundred miles from Shibarghan to Mazar and north to the Salang Pass and intended to proceed to Kabul. On the road from Shibarghan to the Salang Pass the people expressed their support and provided them with food and water. The strike ended on May 18, when government forces blocked their way near the Salang Pass, promised to consider their demands, and put them on buses and trucks bound for Shibarghan. Later the government dismissed a number of workers and arrested others on charges of stirring up trouble. When workers and employees of the Jangalak automotive maintenance repair workshop went on strike in June 1968, the state intervened and detained more than twenty members of the PYO on charges of inciting workers to strike. The state sentenced them to imprisonment and payment of fines.¹⁷

Radicalization of politics and workers' strikes also inspired a segment of the tribal communities to oppose the state policy of eliminating local participation in the decision-making process regarding local development. The Pashtun tribes of Sipai and Mandozai in Nangarhar mounted a surprise attack on government offices and police headquarters and seized ammunition depots. In Jalalabad, people attacked

the government-owned Spinzar Hotel and continued their assaults on other government institutions.¹⁸

Student participation in political rallies intensified, exposing administrative corruption and the growing deterioration of the standard of living. They also condemned the political and economic policies of imperial powers in the developing world. The students were also opposed to some of the educational guidelines and rules by the administration without considering students' views. Table 4.4 lists some of the student strikes, which peaked during the months of May and June 1968.

Table 4.4 Chronology of student strikes, 1968

Month	Strike	Location
April	Students strike against repressive school administration	Nimrooz
May	2000 high school students who had failed Kabul University's entrance examinations	Kabul
	Students at the Afghanistan Institute of Technology, Technicum, School of Nursing, Teachers' Training College, two students killed, May 21	Kabul
	Students at Kabul University, Departments of Islamic Studies, Law, and Medicine for graduate programs	Kabul
June	Students strike at the Afghanistan Institute of Technology continues	Kabul
	Students at Kabul University, Department of Education	Kabul
	Students strike at Departments of Law and Medicine continues until June 27	Kabul
	Students in support of workers strike in Gulbahar	Parwan
	Students in support of workers strike in Jab al-Seraj	Parwan
	Students of Paktiya Teachers' Training College and High School demanding library improvements, free press, and so on, June 4–5	Paktiya
	Students strike at Teachers' Training College in solidarity with the workers	Qunduz
	Students join workers and peasants demonstration	Qunduz

Source: Adapted from Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*. Oxford Pakistan Paperbacks (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 620.

In August 1971 students at Kabul University formed the Students' Union to defend the democratic rights of students and use the union as leverage in negotiations with university and government officials. Abdulillah Rastakhiz, of Herat, was one of the charismatic and passionate speakers of the union. (Rastakhiz was appointed as a teacher in one of the schools in his hometown of Herat after he completed his studies at Kabul University. In 1979 the pro-Soviet government arrested and executed him). To effectively lead the students' struggle for the attainment of their rights, the union formed a Supreme Council that was dominated by members and sympathizers of the PYO. The PYO frequently organized public forums and meetings on the campus of Kabul University and in its dormitories to publicize their views and challenge the reformist views and practices of the pro-Soviets and Islamic orthodoxy of *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman*. During a student gathering on the campus of Kabul University in June 1972, a melee broke out between supporters of the PYO and those of *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman*, resulting in injuries to several students on both sides. One of the PYO's prominent activists, Saidal Sukhandan, was severely injured and died in the hospital. The PYO accused Hikmatyar of murdering him.¹⁹ The police arrested three persons, including Hikmatyar, in connection with Sukhandan's death and a court sentenced Hikmatyar to three years in jail. However, he was freed in 1973 during Mohammad Musa Shafiq's reign as prime minister. The Students' Union expelled *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman* from its membership, regarding it as a terrorist organization.

Tensions between Islamic and radical and revolutionary organizations remained high. Another confrontation between the two groups occurred on the campus of the Polytechnic University during the month of Ramadan (the month of fasting for Muslims). When some students did not observe fasting, Islamists confronted them and a fight broke out. Police intervened to disperse the crowd and the government took action against the PYO, fired four faculty members on charges of being accomplices to those who intended to create disturbances on the campus, and arrested several other PYO members, sentencing them to several years of imprisonment.

The PYO was the only credible organization on the left that agitated for the concept of peoples' revolution and revolutionary armed struggle. It suffered a split in 1973 that led to the formation of a number of revolutionary groups, each adhering to varying tenets of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism (see Table 4.5). The split was based on ideological and political differences that emerged among core leaders with regard to the organization's policies and the direction of development

Table 4.5 Major revolutionary organizations active in Afghanistan's politics

Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Mutaraqi (Progressive Youth Organization [PYO]), known as *Shula-e-Jawid*

Gruh-e-Enqilabi (Revolutionary Group [RG]), later renamed *Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan Liberation Organization [ALO])

Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaqa-e-Kargar (Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class), also known as *Akhgar* (now Defenders of Scientific Socialism)

Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan (SAMA; Peoples Liberation Organization of Afghanistan)

Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan [RAWA])

Sazman-e-Paikar Baray-e-Azadi-e-Afghanistan (*Paikar*; Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan)

Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei (SAWO; Organization of the True Patriots)

Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Afghanistan (Communist Party of Afghanistan)

Khorasan

in the future. The left wing criticized the organization's leaders for their dogmatic views and failing to provide a comprehensive political strategy to lead the revolutionary movement. It also criticized them for their inability to mobilize the peasantry. They complained that the organization was restricting its activity to ideological and political works among students and intellectuals in urban and provincial centers and among a small number of blue-collar workers.

During the republican regime (1973–78), organizations were prohibited from engaging in politics and state repressive policies caused the revolutionary organizations to remain underground, limiting their spheres of political activity to distribution of a few antistate leaflets. Dismayed with the passivity of the revolutionaries, Dr. Faiz Ahmad and his friends formed a new organization, *Gruh-e-Enqilabi* (Revolutionary Group [RG]), to work with the revolutionaries and provide direction to the political struggle for change. RG adhered to the political and philosophical views of Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung and articulated the urgency for continued political and ideological work among the peasantry on the grounds that Afghanistan is predominantly an agrarian society. It regarded the peasantry as a major force in the neodemocratic revolution, similar to the importance accorded to the Chinese peasantry by Mao.

After Mao's death in September 1976, a number of revolutionaries engaged in a rigorous reassessment of Mao's leadership, his theoretical and political writings, and the impact of his revolutionary works on leftist discourse in the international arena. The debate about Mao was partly the result of ideological and political rifts that emerged between China and Albania. Enver Hoxha (1908–85), head of state and chairman of the Party of Labor of Albania, accused China of revisionism, criticized the Three World Theory advanced by Chinese leaders in assessing the international situation, and condemned China's alliance with Western imperial powers. The RG advocated a peoples' revolution, worked to mobilize the peasantry, and promoted gender equality and women's involvement in the revolutionary movement. To this end it formed *Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan [RAWA]) in 1977.

A splinter revolutionary group, *Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaq-e-Kargar* (Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class), known as *Akhgar*, emphasized the urgency of building a working-class party and argued that without such a party, efforts by the revolutionary movement were bound to fail. Building a working-class party was the cornerstone of the organization, distinguishing it from its counterparts. It viewed China as a social imperialist and revisionist country, and after Mao's death it criticized Mao's basic political and philosophical orientations. In 1982 it revised its assessment of Mao, regarding him a great revolutionary leader in China, but not a great Marxist-Leninist, and attributed the success and the failure of the Chinese revolution to him. *Akhgar* articulated self-reliance as the primary focus of its policies, maintaining that such a strategy would shield the revolutionary organizations from outside influences, as foreign aid undermines the autonomy of political organizations. *Akhgar* condemned the United States as a world imperialist power and the Soviet Union as a social imperialist, and said the two superpowers were bent on dividing the world between them. It opposed alliance with one superpower against the other, seeing it as a grave political error and regarding such a policy as counterproductive to the interests of the revolutionary movement in peripheral societies.

The Revolutionary Group suffered a split because of differences among its core members on strategies and tactics of revolutionary armed struggle. Abdul Majid Kalakani and his associates left the group and formed a new organization, *Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhs-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* (SAMA; Peoples' Liberation Organization of Afghanistan). He accused RG of adopting dogmatic views on national and international situations and articulated the need for a militant

revolutionary organization. Its political platform emphasized the formation of a working-class party, united front, and a peoples' army.

When the pro-Soviet PDPA seized power in a military coup in April 1978, the revolutionaries regarded the regime as a Soviet puppet and opposed its reforms and repressive policies. Revolutionaries tried to unite against the regime, but failed to resolve their ideological differences. To effectively fight the regime, a number of revolutionary organizations postulated the formation of an alliance with other antistate groups. RG formed *Jabha-e-Mubarizin-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan's Revolutionary Mujahidin Front) in June 1979, which included a few militant Islamic organizations. *Akhgar* did not support the concept of alliance with Islamic organizations, believing that if the revolutionaries were not dominant in the alliance then they would remain subservient to the policies of the Islamic and liberal organizations dictating the terms of alliance. Instead, it stressed the need for revolutionaries to work toward resolving their political and ideological differences, uniting and building a Communist party capable of leading the revolutionary armed struggle.

On August 5, 1979, *Jabha-e-Mubarizin* began simultaneous uprisings at the *Bala Hisar* army garrison in Kabul and several other major cities. The *Bala Hisar* insurrection began at eleven in the morning and lasted until the evening. Members of the front seized a few tanks and drove them toward the presidential palace, hoping that their action would encourage the army in Kabul to join them and attack the palace. However, they failed to establish communications with their friends in other army units. They fought and killed scores of *Khalqi* officers, but were defeated as the state used heavy artillery and helicopter gunships to bomb their positions. Well-known individuals who played a prominent role in the insurrection were Khalid and Gul Ahmad. It is estimated that four hundred people lost their lives during the insurrection, and the pro-Soviet government quickly blamed the religious leaders of Iran for instigating the rebellion. Soon after crushing the rebellion the regime arrested individuals suspected of having links with the rebellion and executed individuals such as Daoud, instructor at the Kabul Police Academy, Mohsin, a prominent Hazara intellectual, Homayun, Zia Gawhari, Dr. Nimat, Habib Zikirya, and Nainawaz, a well-known musician and composer.²⁰ Sometime later, RG reassessed the outcome of the failed insurrection and admitted to its erroneous position, maintaining that such a courageous act was the natural outcome of the prevailing political situation.

Although each revolutionary organization has its own socio-economic program, their political, social, cultural, and economic policies

share many similarities to those articulated by *Akhgar*—for example *Akhgar* supported establishment of a People's Democratic Republic and a People's Council on the basis of a general election, empowerment of the citizens to recall their elected representative at any time, formation of a revolutionary army, honoring the rights of individuals, safeguarding freedom of speech, press, religion, and association, supporting gender equality, and the right to self-determination of nations to the point of secession. It also stated that its policies included the abrogation of economic contracts with all imperial powers, separation of religion and state, fighting racial, cultural, and language discrimination, and supporting public welfare projects, including building hospitals, recreational facilities, and roads, and providing drinking water and preventive medicine.²¹

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS DURING THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

Revolutionary organizations condemned the Soviet invasion and their continued occupation and participated in the struggle to liberate the country. In Kabul, in particular, they remained a force to be reckoned with for the Soviet-backed government, causing the state intelligence agency, KHAD, to systematically stalk and arrest their members. One of the prominent organizations in the fight against the Soviet occupation was SAMA. It lost many members, including its leader Abdul Majid Kalakani, a hero of the national liberation movement.

Kalakani was born in 1939 in the Kalakan district north of Kabul. The repressive government of Mohammad Hashim (1933–46) arrested his father and grandfather, confiscated their landed property, and executed them in 1945. Kalakani was eight years old and his younger brother Abdul Qayum Rahbar was three when the government exiled them and their mother to Qandahar, where they spent eight years. After the government pardoned them, the family returned to Kabul, where Kalakani continued his studies and later attended a school of theology. In 1951 the school principal was murdered and police arrested Kalakani and accused him of the murder, sentencing him to three years in prison.²²

Kalakani devoted his life to revolutionary works, supported the cause of the dispossessed, and warned state bureaucrats to stop harassing the poor. The republican regime of Daoud viewed him as a threat and made a number of attempts to arrest him, but failed to find him. The state then adopted a different strategy, offering him a prominent post in the government, on the condition that he renounce his

revolutionary activities. Kalakani refused the offer and continued to fight the repressive regime. The Kabul rulers became alarmed at Kalakani's celebrity status, as his popularity grew to mythic proportions. They made his arrest a top priority in order to remove him from the public eye. Abdul Qadir Nooristani, minister of the interior, solicited the help of a well-known convict, Ghulam Hazrat, to capture Kalakani, but Hazrat also failed. Kalakani continued his political activities and was supported by the people, making it difficult for the government to do little more than track his movements.

Kalakani increased his activities after the pro-Soviets seized power, mobilizing people against the Soviet-backed regime. Kalakani's popularity was the main factor that helped SAMA recruit fighters for its cause, even among the armed forces. The organization disrupted the government's communication lines and transportation routes, launched preemptive attacks on military convoys delivering equipment and munitions, and targeting military posts. In June 1980 SAMA formed *Jabha-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National United Front of Afghanistan), which comprised several radical organizations, left-wing Pashtun nationalists, religious leaders such as the *Pir* of Obbeh in Herat, and others, to fight the Soviet occupation army. Kalakani was captured on February 27, 1980, when he went to the Microriyon apartment complex in Kabul to see a friend and offer his condolences for the death of a family member. It is believed that the family sent a young girl to a nearby market to shop and Haji Sakhi, deputy of KHAD, recognized her and inquired as to who was in her apartment and she disclosed the information about Kalakani. Sakhi immediately notified KHAD as to the whereabouts of Kalakani, and within a half hour KHAD agents cordoned off the area. Kalakani tried to escape, but security agents knocked him unconscious and took him to KHAD for interrogation.²³ SAMA threatened the Soviet-backed government that they would retaliate if Kalakani was not treated fairly. The regime feared Kalakani and did not spare his life. They executed him without a trial on June 8, 1980. Radio Afghanistan announced Kalakani's execution, referring to him as a bandit.

Kalakani believed in the power of the people and their friendship. He lived among them, and unlike armchair revolutionaries who looked at people from a remote distance, Kalakani was with the people. The language he spoke was the language of the people and they identified with his apotheosis, and for this reason people called him *Majid Agha*. His opponents called him by derogatory names, and the Western media portrayed him as Afghanistan's Robin Hood. Kalakani was a writer, a social activist, and a partisan in the revolutionary

movement, admiring self-sacrifice and revolutionary zeal in his writings. Kalakani led SAMA for a short time and transformed it into a militant organization, and because of his heroic struggle against repressive regimes and his anti-Soviet stance, people respected and admired him and lamented his death.

SAMA was determined to avenge Kalakani's death and launched a surprise attack on an army garrison, seizing munitions. SAMA remained defiant of the puppet regime and fought for the liberation of the country, and in the process lost a number of its senior members, including Aziz Toghyan. Toghyan graduated from the College of Literature and Humanities in Kabul, taught at schools in Kabul, and mobilized the people to fight the Soviet occupation army. When KHAD identified him and tried to arrest him, Toghyan fought them, but was killed.²⁴ A leading member of SAMA's Central Committee, Nadir Ali Poya, was arrested. During interrogation by a state official he would not denounce his association with SAMA, but instead expressed pride in being a member. The Soviet-backed regime executed him.

After Kalakani's death, his brother Abdul Qayum Rahbar took his place and led the organization. Rahbar completed his higher education in Egypt and Western Europe. In the mid-1980s he settled in Pakistan, participated in the liberation movement, and succeeded in rebuilding the organization. His political activities in Pakistan threatened the interests of Islamic fundamentalists who opposed the politics of the revolutionary intellectuals, and they assassinated him in Pakistan on January 27, 1990. Rival political groups criticized SAMA's exclusive focus on partisan activity, arguing that its practical activities undermined the importance of ideological and political work to resolve the conflicting theoretical issues that divided the revolutionary movement and efforts toward establishment of Communist party. Although SAMA's opponents admired the organization's heroic struggle in the national liberation struggle, they blamed it for its failure to promote the organization to the level of a party.

Another organization active in the anti-Soviet resistance was *Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei* (SAWO). It suffered a major blow when the KHAD arrested members of its Central Committee. Najibullah, head of KHAD, who became head of state from 1986 to 1992, met revolutionary inmates at the Pol-e-Charkhi prison with the hope of persuading them to give up their struggle against the regime. Najibullah knew one of the inmates, Bashir Bahman, when they were students at Kabul University in the 1960s, and suggested to him that if he and his groups would renounce violence and radical

political discourse they would be freed and given posts in the government. Bahman was a dedicated revolutionary and rejected Najibullah's offer, responding that he and his supporters would not "sleep under the blanket" like him, whoring with Russians.²⁵ In February 1981 a court in Kabul sentenced Bashir Bahman, Latif Mahmoodi, Masjidi Hedayat, Yunous Zaryab, Shah Alam Panjshiri, and Najib to death. The court sentenced three inmates to sixteen years of imprisonment and the rest of the inmates received sentences ranging from one to ten years.²⁶ Raja Anwar, a Pakistani citizen who was arrested by the state intelligence agency and sentenced to several years in the Pol-e-Charkhi prison in Kabul, described the reaction of defiant revolutionary inmates sentenced to death: "Before they were sent to the gallows they shouted 'long live communism.'"²⁷ The regime's repressive policies did not deter revolutionaries and nationalists from their struggle, but rather strengthened their resolve to fight for the liberation of the country.

The coercive policies of the puppet regime forced a significant number of revolutionary intellectuals to leave the country and settle in Pakistan and Iran; a number also migrated to Western Europe and North America. They continued to render assistance to the revolutionary movement at home, sending money so their comrades could continue to fight for liberation of the country. In exile these revolutionaries published a number of weekly and monthly papers, including *FAZA*, *Bistusay-e-Saur*, *Afghanistan-e-Azad*, and *Shula-e-Jawid*. Despite political hurdles, the revolutionaries strove to improve their organizational capabilities. For example, RG succeeded in doing so when it renamed itself *Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan Liberation Organization [ALO]). Because of its vocal opposition to the regressive policies of Islamic fundamentalists, ALO suffered a severe blow when assassins affiliated with *Hizb-e-Islami* abducted and murdered its chairman, Dr. Faiz Ahmad, together with Ashraf, a member of its central committee, and ten members of the organization in Pakistan on November 12, 1986. Khan Mohammad, a member of the ALO, betrayed the organization, collaborating with *Hizb-e-Islami* and providing it with critical information on their whereabouts.²⁸ Although the ALO endured continued harassment by Islamic fundamentalists, it did not abandon its struggle and continued to expose the atrocities committed by Islamic fundamentalist against the people.

The Soviet-backed government made it a priority to defame supporters of revolutionary organizations and weaken their base of support, often referring to them by derogatory names such as dogmatists and sellouts

who wage war on Afghanistan with the support of imperial powers. Such accusations were evident when KHAD arrested Yunus Akbari, a former faculty member in the Department of Sciences at Kabul University, in 1983. Under extreme physical torture KHAD extracted a confession statement: "I, Dr. Faiz and his wife Leila [Meena], Najeeb, Abeer, and Naseem flew from Karachi to Beijing via Singapore. However much I questioned Dr. Faiz about the purpose of this trip, he told me nothing. In Beijing we were met by a high-ranking official in charge of foreigners and two interpreters. Later, the head of that department and his deputy met with our delegation. At that meeting Dr. Faiz presented a report to the Chinese and asked for \$10 million in aid. The Chinese expressed doubt about that sum and gave him only \$200,000."²⁹ One of the common methods of making inmates confess to crimes that they had not committed was brute physical torture, forcing inmates to affix their signatures on a ready-made confession statement prepared for them by the intelligence agency. After the state extracted a forced statement of confession from Akbari stating he received Chinese support, it executed him in 1984.

As relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated, China condemned the Soviet Union as a social imperialist and strengthened its ties with the United States in the late 1970s in order to deter the Soviet threat on its territories. China condemned the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and supported the anti-Soviet armed struggle spearheaded by U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists. The ALO condemned China's policy of abandoning support for revolutionary movements around the world, stating that the Communist Party and the government of China have

adopted a marked counter-revolutionary attitude during the years of our war of resistance against Soviet aggression, and instead of lending succor to revolutionary groups, they extended unqualified support, according to the dictates of their economic and political interests, to fundamentalist counter-revolutionaries through the reactionary Zia al-Haq regime . . . In our present appraisal of the Communist Party of China we endorse and affirm the following proposition expressed by former leaders of China. "If some day China changes her political hue and becomes a superpower, if she assumes the role of a world tyrant and bullies, violates and exploits other countries and peoples, then we call on the peoples of the world to label her as social imperialist, expose her, oppose her, and together with the people of China, bring her down."³⁰

Another revolutionary organization with a record of anti-Soviet activities is RAWA, headed by Meena, wife of the late Dr. Faiz Ahmad.

In late 1981 the French Socialist Party invited Meena to participate at an international forum held in France to lecture on the national liberation movement in Afghanistan. Meena was a refugee in Quetta, Pakistan, and could not apply for a passport from the Afghanistan consulate or the embassy in Pakistan to facilitate her visit to Europe. RAWA forged a passport issued to Kishor Kumar, a Hindu citizen of Afghanistan, altering the original passport holder's name to read Meena Kishwar Kamal.³¹ As the only women's revolutionary organization, RAWA's top priority was to support women's rights to equal pay and gender equality in the political and social arena. It published a monthly journal, *Payam-e-Zan* (Message of Women), that provided news, documentaries, and analytical reports criticizing the policies and programs of the puppet regime as well as Islamic fundamentalists and their regressive policies toward women. The U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists reviled and opposed RAWA's involvement in the country's politics, and in February 1987 they assassinated Meena in Pakistan. Despite repeated death threats by Islamic fundamentalists, members of RAWA continued to organize demonstrations and meetings and condemned the brutality of the warlords and their negative perception of women's role in the social and political arena. RAWA activists participated in numerous international talk shows and conferences, exposing violations of human and women's rights by Islamic fundamentalists during and in the post-Taliban period.

In the 1980s the revolutionaries failed to unite and form a single party despite several attempts to resolve political and ideological differences on national issues and political transformation in the international arena. *Ettihad-e-Marksist-Leninistha-e-Afghanistan* (Union of Marxist-Leninist of Afghanistan [EMLA]) was formed with the goal of uniting the revolutionary organizations, but it failed. The Organization of Revolutionary Communists of Afghanistan (ORCA) tried as well, but it too failed. It then renamed itself *Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Afghanistan* (Communist Party of Afghanistan [CPA]) on May 1, 1991, publishing a short-lived paper, *Shula-e-Jawid*, that had been published by the PYO in 1968. The CPA forged closer working relations with its U.S.-based counterpart, the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA (RCP-USA), and joined the Revolutionary International Movement (RIM) as a signatory member. The Soviet-backed government arrested and executed many members of the revolutionary organizations active in Afghanistan.³²

THE UNITED STATES AND ISLAMIC PARTIES

When the pro-Soviet PDPA seized power in April 1978 and Afghanistan was declared a democratic republic, the United States had no option but to extend official recognition to the regime. The United States monitored developments in Afghanistan and waited to see what would transpire after the regime tried to implement its reform policies. The United States wavered on whether to close its embassy in Kabul or to continue normal diplomatic ties with the regime and ultimately decided that it was in its best interest to remain engaged in Afghanistan:

One option would be for us to phase out our activities in Afghanistan, but we believe this would be very unsettling to Afghanistan's neighbors and incompatible with their policies. The DRA has not asked us to pack our bags and leave but on the contrary has accepted our policy of maintaining our interest and presence. Closing out our efforts in Afghanistan would likely be seen as an abdication of our responsibility and would accomplish for the Soviets one of their primary objectives, namely to reduce further US and Western influence in Afghanistan and the region. It would not be in our interest to give such a blank check signed to Moscow.³³

After U.S. ambassador Adolph Dubs was killed in Kabul, the United States reduced its economic assistance programs for the fiscal years of 1979 and 1980 and terminated military assistance, which was in the planning stages. However, the United States increased humanitarian assistance to refugees and financial support to the Islamic fundamentalists through the military regime of General Mohammad Zia al-Haq of Pakistan. In a confidential memorandum, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul informed the Department of State regarding Kabul's attitude in seeking better relations with the United States:

During the last seven days, we have been receiving clear signals that the DRA seeks better relations with us. I think it is important that these be appreciated. But I also believe it is too early to tell whether these signs will be substantiated in areas important to us. As we pointed out before to the Department, the DRA . . . [has] been conducting its policy towards us on two planes: on one level, they repeatedly inform us that the DRA wants better relations and that they consider the present situation "unnatural." Further, on this plane, they do such things as sending an unusually large number of ministers [3] to our July 4 reception, and most recently president and Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin received

me warmly at the presidential palace. On the other hand, on another level, in areas more important to us, such as investigating Ambassador Dubs's death, and carrying out our Peace Corps, USAID, and USICA programs, we have encountered many roadblocks. Additionally the government has, over the last two months, sought a reduction in the size of the US embassy. In my view, how we finally come out on this last issue will be the real test of their true intentions toward us.³⁴

After Amin seized leadership of the party and state in September 1979, the United States ignored his overtures to strengthen ties with the West. Amin's primary concern was consolidation of his power and maintenance of stability, and to achieve them he intended to normalize relations with the United States and its key regional ally, Pakistan, in the hope that the two countries would cease their support to the Islamic fundamentalists and other opposition forces fighting his regime from bases in Pakistan. The United States believed that Amin did not enjoy the full support of the ruling party and that the people viewed him as a bloodthirsty dictator. It therefore decided not to continue its economic aid to Afghanistan. It supported the Islamic fundamentalists in their fight against the Kabul regime even though it was well aware that fundamentalists had committed atrocities, murdering nationalists, revolutionaries, and patriots and those who did not agree with their policies. Generally people despised the Islamic fundamentalists, and their rigid Islamization policies drove many to support the puppet regime, regarding it as the lesser evil. Regarding U.S. support for moderate Islamic groups if they manage to establish their leadership in Afghanistan, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul informed the Department of State that

the victory of the opposition and the collapse of a pro-Soviet leftist radical regime would certainly serve the US interest and it would show the Third World that the perspective of our rival Marxist-Leninists on the "inevitability" of world history is not necessarily true. A truly international non-aligned movement would be welcomed by us. The US participation in economic construction would become possible in the case of the collapse of the DRA. However, there is no clear evidence on the programs of the opposition, but inside the country a group of opposition parties *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Enqilab-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*, National Front for Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan, ostensibly supports the creation of a traditional Grand National Assembly to determine the future of Afghanistan. The US would provide democratic support to such an organization if it truly comes into existence.³⁵

The United States initially supported pro-Western technocrats who settled in Pakistan in the hope that these forces would be able to provide an alternative to the Islamic fundamentalists, as it viewed the policies of the Islamic fundamentalists to be counter to its declared policy of support for human rights. A declassified memorandum by the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to the Department of State reads "the available manifesto issued by some opposition groups call for a social and economic system based on the 'fundamentalist' tenets of Islam, and therefore, an opposition-led regime would probably not have social and economic reforms (so necessary for this backward country high on its priority list). Thousands of personal vendettas would probably be carried out against surviving *Khalqi* officials, thereby probably tarnishing a post-DRA regime's human rights record. No matter how justified retribution against some officials might appear to be."³⁶ The failure of pro-Western technocrats to assert their role in the liberation movement caused the United States to support the Islamic fundamentalists, who could easily mobilize the deeply religious-minded people to fight the Kabul regime.

The United States regarded South Asia and the Persian Gulf as its spheres of influence. It regarded the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as a calculated strategy intended to acquire control over a major portion of the world's oil resources, posing a direct threat to the security of the region and the United States. It feared that an occupied Afghanistan would provide the Soviets with bases to threaten its regional allies—Pakistan, Iran, and other Middle Eastern countries. The United States was determined to make the Soviet Union pay a heavy price for its occupation of the country and imposed a grain embargo on the Soviet Union and boycotted the 1980 Olympic games. President Ronald Reagan exploited the Soviet invasion in order to promote the United States as a friend of the oppressed people of Afghanistan and mobilized world Muslim opinion against the Soviet occupation. When George P. Shultz visited Pakistan he depicted the United States as a true friend and ally of national liberation movements in countries dominated by the Soviet Union, similar to the Soviet policy toward U.S.-dominated countries. At a gathering of refugees in a camp in Peshawar, Shultz told them that "this is a gathering in the name of freedom, a gathering in the name of self-determination, a gathering in the name of getting the Soviet forces out of Afghanistan, a gathering in the name of a sovereign Afghanistan controlled by its own people."³⁷

The prime objective of the United States in supporting the Islamic fundamentalists was threefold: to transform Afghanistan into a Soviet

Vietnam; to equate Communism with occupation, terror, and repression; and to mobilize international opinion to fight Soviet expansionism. One of the influential supporters of the anti-Soviet campaign was Charles Wilson, a democratic representative from Texas who tried to raise funds for the Islamic fundamentalists. Wilson forcefully lobbied the U.S. Congress and the government to support the Islamic fundamentalists in their efforts to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan. To convince critics in the United States, Wilson highlighted the significance of U.S. aid to the Islamists, saying, "There aren't going to be any more helicopters going back to Kabul with holes in them. They are going down. There were 58,000 dead in Vietnam and we owe the Russians one and you can quote me on that. I have had a slight obsession with it, because of Vietnam. I thought the Soviets ought to get a dose of it. I have been of the opinion that this money was better spent to hurt our adversaries than other money in the Defense Department."³⁸

The CIA trained Afghan nationals to fight Kabul and the Soviet army. It prepared a list of Afghan nationals residing in Europe and the United States, particularly students, and identified fifty potential candidates for training. The first group of trained individuals with fake names and travel documents was sent to Afghanistan in 1982. Thirty Afghan spies were stationed in Saudi Arabia. They worked for small cargo companies, shipping boxes of machine guns to the Islamic warriors via Pakistan.³⁹ Beginning in 1979, approximately \$75 million annually in military aid was sent to Islamic fundamentalists, the largest CIA covert operation since the Vietnam War.⁴⁰ In the mid-1980s the United States provided Stinger missiles, which enabled the insurgents to inflict significant damage on the Soviets. Leaders of the Islamic parties pocketed the bulk of the international aid and did not coordinate their anti-Soviet efforts, so the CIA provided needed equipment and money directly to the front-line commanders inside Afghanistan. Largely because of U.S. aid to the Islamic fundamentalists, the Soviets were forced to withdraw their troops in 1989.

CHAPTER 5



MUJAHIDIN, CIVIL WAR, AND THE TALIBAN

ESTABLISHMENT OF A THEOCRATIC REGIME

Growing personal and political differences over the future course of development between the *Parcham* and *Khalq* factions of the pro-Soviet ruling party *Hizb-e-Watan*, formerly known as the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), and escalating armed struggle by U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists known as the *Mujahidin* (Islamic warriors) led to the collapse of Najibullah's rule on April 27, 1992. Prior to the disintegration of the regime, Najibullah was forced to endorse the United Nations (UN) peace proposal that transferred power to a coalition of Islamic parties. Najibullah agreed to surrender power, leave the country, and settle in India, on the condition that financial assistance be made available to him in exile. The amount he requested was for "an honorable living for two generations," stating "I would not like to live on doles . . . It was a question of one million U.S. dollars or so which Gen. Zia [al-Haq] personally managed through the courtesy of an Arab country."¹ Najibullah's dream of a comfortable life in exile did not materialize, as his opponents did not allow him to leave the country, forcing him to seek refuge at the United Nations compound in Kabul on April 16, 1992. He was able to send his wife, Fatana, and three daughters to New Delhi, India, before the situation deteriorated in Kabul.

Progovernment Uzbek militia leader Abdul Rashid Dostam, who formed the backbone of the Kabul regime in the north, was disenchanted with Najibullah and refused to recognize Pashtun army generals that Kabul sent in January 1992 to monitor and control the activities of non-Pashtun officers. Dostam did not get along with the Pashtuns in the army or in the party, *Hizb-e-Watan*, and it is said

that during a visit to Moscow in July 1990 he stated that Uzbeks and Turkmen could no longer accept Pashtun domination of political affairs in the non-Pashtun-settled regions as they had in the past. Dostam encouraged like-minded officers to unite in the anti-Najibullah efforts and they formed a movement in the north that became known as *Harakat-e-Shamal* (Movement of the North). In April 1992 *Harakat-e-Shamal* formed an alliance with *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, headed by Abdul Ali Mazari, and *Shura-e-Nazar-e-Shamal* (Supervisory Council of the North), formed in 1985 by Ahmad Shah Masoud, an affiliate of *Jamiat-e-Islami*. The alliance became known as *Shura-e-Aali-e-Jihadi Islami* (Supreme Council of Islamic Jihad), with Masoud as the head of the alliance, Mohammad Mohaqiq as his deputy, and Dostam as chief of the army. The *Shura* intended to prevent the seizure of power by Pashtun elements of the regime and Hikmatyar of *Hizb-e-Islami* and sent forces to topple Najibullah and seize Kabul.

On April 16 Masoud signed an agreement with the Kabul regime regarding the transfer of power to the *Mujahidin*. Since then the issue of ethnicity has become a prominent feature of the country's politics, as most non-Pashtun ethnic members sided with *Shura-e-Nazar-e-Shamal* and most Pashtun members sided with *Hizb-e-Islami*. The Islamic warriors seized control of several provinces, mobilized their forces, and advanced toward Kabul. They established bases in and around the city so they could quickly move in and consolidate gains. Anticipating an immediate collapse of the regime, *Hizb-e-Islami* consolidated its positions in the Charasyab, Sahak, and Shiwaki districts on the outskirts of Kabul, and forces of *Shura-e-Nazar-e-Shamal* controlled the Bagram military airbase north of Kabul. On April 25, the Islamic warriors moved into Kabul, but the situation soon deteriorated into infighting, with groups taking control of different parts of the city and government institutions. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* seized control of the Ministry of the Interior, *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat* took over the Ministry of Finance, and *Shura-e-Nazar-e-Shamal* seized the Ministry of State Security and other strategic locations in the city, maintaining its dominant position over rival groups. As Islamic warriors seized Kabul, they looted public property, regarding the city as a war trophy.

After Masoud consolidated his positions in Kabul he did not honor the treaty he signed with the Movement of the North and *Hizb-e-Wahdat* for a power-sharing arrangement. He invited Mojad-dadi, head of Afghanistan's interim government (AIG) as agreed to in the Peshawar Agreement of April 24, 1992, to return and assume leadership of the country.² The Peshawar Agreement stipulated that

Mojaddadi must be head of state for two months, followed by Burhanuddin Rabbani as head of state for four months, until the formation of a new government and holding a general election to elect the next head of state. On April 28 Mojaddadi returned to Kabul and was proclaimed the interim head of state.

Mojaddadi was born in Kabul in 1925, completed his studies in Kabul and at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and taught Islamic studies at schools and colleges in Afghanistan. After Mojaddadi left Kabul and settled in Denmark, where he was in charge of the Islamic Center from 1974 to 1978, and after the pro-Soviets seized power, he settled in Pakistan and participated in the struggle against the Kabul regime. Mojaddadi was a sworn enemy of communism to the degree that when his nephew Rahmatullah Mojaddadi died while swimming in the Soviet Union, Mojaddadi did not allow anyone to touch his nephew's body, arguing that touching an unbeliever would contaminate the health of believers.³

Mojaddadi declared a general amnesty and called upon people to unite and support his leadership. Kabul convinced Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia to send delegations to Kabul to study the situation and to reopen their embassies. Mojaddadi lacked the means to extend his authority and disarm the warring factions and awaited Masoud's arrival in Kabul to help him restore stability. Mojaddadi appointed Masoud as minister of defense and appointed individuals with *Jihadi* backgrounds to his cabinet. The establishment of an Islamic regime caused most senior pro-Soviet individuals in the government to resign their posts; some settled in the north and supported Dostam, while others left the country and sought asylum in the West. Dostam sent a delegation to meet Masoud and discuss the role of the Movement of the North and its ally *Hizb-e-Wahdat* in the government, but Masoud's response that the alliance was temporary and strained relations, paving the way for armed confrontation.

Although Mojaddadi was head of state, Masoud wielded considerable power and made many important decisions on his own, causing numerous disagreements between the two. To counter Masoud's domination, Mojaddadi strengthened his ties with Dostam. He visited Mazar and met with Dostam, promoting him to the rank of a full general, a policy that caused Mojaddadi's political rivals (i.e., Rabbani, Sayyaf, and Hikmatyar) to denounce the policy of closer relations with former pro-Soviets as un-Islamic. Mojaddadi visited Pakistan, and upon his return his plane was fired upon. He survived, and no group ever claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt. Like other fundamentalists, Mojaddadi also opposed women's participation in

the country's politics, as he regarded politics as the exclusive domain of men. Mojaddadi told the nation that they must not elect a woman as their leader, as he believed that "the weakest nations in the world are those that have a woman as a leader. It does not mean that Islam is against women. On the contrary, it respects them and says they are equal to men. But [history shows] that weak nations are led by women."⁴ Members of the Islamic parties who were appointed to senior posts in the government generally lacked adequate qualifications and experience; they tended to be loyal to their respective parties and used their positions in the state to appropriate national and international funds for their own groups. For example, when Pakistan gave a check for fifty million rupees to the government, it was diverted and credited to the personal bank account of a resistance leader.⁵

In May 1992 leaders of other Islamic groups returned to Kabul. While Mojaddadi was head of state, these *Jihadi* leaders worked to undermine his authority as they initiated their own policies of nation building. Rabbani formed *Shura-e-Jihad* (Council of Jihad), declared the abolishment of *Hizb-e-Watan*, and transferred its assets to the Islamic state. Rabbani proposed that former Soviet puppet leaders Babrak Karmal, Najibullah, and others should be tried in an Islamic court for their crimes, despite the earlier declaration of general amnesty by Mojaddadi. Leaders of the Islamic parties intended to implement their vision of building an Islamic system of governance and promoting an Islamic culture and way of life. Sayyaf reportedly said, "It would be better for the *Mujahidin* to raze Kabul and rebuild it in the image of their version of Islam. If that meant the death of many of the one million people living in Kabul, so be it . . . They were communists, or at least sympathizers, otherwise why would they have stayed in the city during Najibullah's rule."⁶

Hizb-e-Wahdat's opposition to the interim government was because it did not include Hazaras in the power structure. It also maintained that the interim government was formed by the seven Sunni *tanzims* in Pakistan and it was not involved in their decision-making process, leaving the status of Hazaras uncertain in the new political arrangement. *Hizb-e-Wahdat's* opponents viewed the growing Hazara influence as a threat to their own vested interests, and on May 31, 1992, *Ittihad-e-Islami* kidnapped four Hazaras in the Silo area in Kabul. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* retaliated by murdering one of Sayyaf's commanders, triggering armed confrontations between them. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* accused Sayyaf of receiving funds from Saudi Arabia to defend Saudi interests and marginalize the Hazaras' role in Afghanistan. While armed confrontations among Islamic warriors continued, Masoud

was determined to fight his enemy, Hikmatyar, and force him to withdraw his militias from Kabul. To avoid the stigma of promoting Tajik domination, Masoud allied with the politically marginalized Sayyaf, who had differences with Hikmatyar. The war among Islamic warriors caused many residents of Kabul to flee to the northern parts of the country, Pol-e-Khumri, Mazar, and other areas under the command of Dostam, while many others settled in Pakistan and Iran.

Mojaddadi could not restore stability as warring factions ignored his repeated pleas for peace. After his brief rule ended on June 28, 1992, he was reluctant to leave the post but was forced to do so. He was succeeded by Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Rabbani was born in 1940 in Badakhshan. He majored in Islamic studies at Kabul University, received a master of arts degree from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, in 1968, and then taught at Kabul University. A major achievement of Rabbani's government was promulgation of a constitution in July 1992, containing eighty-eight articles. The constitution declared Afghanistan an Islamic state guided by the provisions of the *Quran*, recognized the Hanafi school of Islam as the official religion of the country, and endorsed the *Shura-e-Jihad* as the supreme body that approves the laws and other affairs of the state. Rabbani and his defense minister, Ahmad Shah Masoud, did not support power-sharing to broaden the social base of the regime. They did not see establishment of a broad-based representational government as in their best interest or the interest of the country. They also failed to rally other ethnic communities in support of their leadership. Key government posts were allocated mainly to members of *Jamiat-e-Islami* and its political allies. However, Rabbani's opportunistic allies remained loyal to their own parties and acted upon their directives rather than implementing government policies.

Rabbani's and Masoud's policies antagonized the Pashtuns, who viewed seizure of power by the Tajiks as a major blow to Pashtun historical-political hegemony. Hikmatyar exploited Pashtun grievances to rally disenchanted Pashtuns in support of his political agenda, with the objective of garnering support for his leadership, paving the way to a bloody civil war. Hostilities between Rabbani and Hikmatyar escalated and Hikmatyar ordered rockets launched on Kabul in an attempt to oust Rabbani. As per the Peshawar Agreement, Hikmatyar was next in line to become prime minister, but he refused to take the position because he would not accept Masoud as the minister of Defense and insisted on his removal. After intense negotiations and compromises, Hikmatyar agreed to assume the post of prime minister, but then abruptly nominated Abdul Saboor Farid, a Tajik from

Parwan, to be prime minister. Farid returned to Kabul and assumed the office on July 6, 1992. In so doing, Hikmatyar intended to demonstrate that the government of Kabul was dominated by Tajiks and legitimize the basis for his subsequent opposition to monopolization of power by the Tajiks. Hikmatyar did not consider Pashtun leader Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, head of *Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami*, nor other Pashtun personalities of *Jihadi* backgrounds to be true representatives of the Pashtuns or defenders of their collective interests. Instead, he depicted himself as the true champion of Pashtun interests.

Rabbani did not give due recognition to Dostam, although he played a critical role in the downfall of the Soviet-backed regime and clearly wanted a substantial role in the government. Rabbani remained at odds with him and the pro-Soviet officers associated with him, fearing that recognition of Dostam would cause other Islamic fundamentalists to accuse him of collaboration with pro-Soviets that they had opposed and fought since April 1978. When Dostam requested the Kabul regime recognize the Movement of the North, Rabbani responded that the movement was not a political party and therefore did not qualify for recognition or financial support. This caused Dostam to change the movement to a party, *Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) on June 1, 1992. Dostam now expected Rabbani to recognize the party and give him a role in the government, but Rabbani remained uninterested in sharing power. Rabbani was also under pressure from Hikmatyar, who regarded doing business with Dostam as tantamount to treason and a betrayal of the Islamic *jihad*. Rabbani regarded Dostam's espousal of a federal system of government as contrary to Islamic unity. By advocating a federal system, Dostam could more easily develop his spheres of influence in the Uzbek- and Turkmen-settled regions in the north.

Relations between Rabbani and *Hizb-e-Wahdat* deteriorated, as the latter demanded fair representation in the government and Rabbani refused to accommodate the party. On July 14, 1992, Rabbani and Masoud launched a military offensive on *Hizb-e-Wahdat* in an effort to disarm its fighters, but they failed to do so and armed confrontations between them continued unabated. Political differences between Rabbani and Hikmatyar escalated again, and in August Hikmatyar's militias attacked Rabbani forces in Kabul and called for him to step down. Chaos descended on Kabul and other parts of the country as Islamic fundamentalists fought each other to establish their domination of the country's politics. Each Islamic group maintained its own army, controlling a segment of the country and collecting revenue

to use for their own aims. This situation compelled Rabbani to print banknotes in Russia to pay his forces and those of his alliance.

After Rabbani's term as head of state ended on October 31, 1992, he transferred power to the *Shura-e-Jihad*, but by December 30, 1992, he maneuvered his way into reelection as head of state. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* was persuaded by Iran to support Rabbani, as Iran viewed that rule by the Persian-speaking Tajik was in its best interest, as opposed to the Pashtuns, who did not share cultural and linguistic affinities. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* continued to oppose Rabbani's leadership and, along with other opponents, accused him of rigging votes; five out of nine parties challenged the election results. In addition to ideological differences, the issue of ethnicity further exacerbated hostilities among the Islamic fundamentalists. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* demanded recognition of Shia jurisprudence, representation in the government on the basis of the ethnic composition rather than religious affiliation, and establishment of a federal type of government. To placate the Hazaras, Rabbani involved a few Shia figures in the government, but this gesture did not convince *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and they continued to demand more Hazara representation in the state. Armed confrontations between *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and the government continued as before.

To maintain his hold on power, Rabbani resorted to the old colonial strategy of "divide and conquer," pitting one ethnic community against another. The state security department was directed to fuel ethnic conflict among the Hazaras and Pashtuns. A facsimile of a translated letter instructed government officials to authorize every department to intensify the conflicts between *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and *Hizb-e-Harakat-e-Islami*, even to encourage ethnic cleansing among Hazaras and Pashtuns, so as to incite hostilities among inhabitants of the central and northern parts of Afghanistan. It encouraged both Shia and Sunni religious differences and ethnic hostilities between the Hazaras and Pashtuns, either of which would provide sufficient distraction from future military fronts.⁷

Afghanistan was essentially divided into several regional power centers controlled by a number of Islamic parties. Rabbani and his group were in charge of the fledgling government in Kabul and maintained control of regions in the northeast, such as Badakhshan, Panjshir, and Takhar. Qunduz, with significant Pashtun settlements, was under the control of Pashtun commander Amir Chughai of *Hizb-e-Ittihad-e-Islami*, an ally of Rabbani. In the western region, Rabbani's ally Mohammad Ismail established his rule over a few provinces around Herat, as growing business and trade with Iran enabled him to gain the loyalty of commanders there. In the eastern region, the Jalalabad

Shura under the leadership of Haji Abdul Qadir established its domination in several provinces. Hikmatyar controlled small regions in the southern and eastern parts of the country and areas near Kabul. In the north, Dostam and his ally Mansoor Naderi, chief of the Ismaili community of Baghlan, with a combined force of 120,000 men, maintained effective control of regions such as Baghlan, Balkh, Samangan, Faryab, and Jawzjan, as well as major ports in the northern parts of Qunduz. Relative stability in the northern region convinced the UN to transfer its offices from Kabul to Mazar in August 1992. Countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia also established consular offices there. Pro-Soviet officials, including former Soviet puppet leader Babrak Karmal and a number of businessmen, also left Kabul and settled in the north.

Under pressure from Uzbekistan, Dostam was forced to retract his separatist position and verbally acknowledge the sovereignty of Afghanistan. Provinces in the south, including Qandahar, were divided among smaller *Jihadi* groups. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* established its influence over Bamiyan and the Hazara-settled regions in the northern areas of the country as well as the Hazara settlements in the western suburbs of Kabul, such as Afshar, Karta-e-Say, and Dasht-e-Barchi. They found the Tajiks to be their main political rivals, bent on bringing Hazara-settled districts in Kabul under their control.

None of these leaders managed to effectively build grassroots support and their policies never transcended tribalism and regionalism. A major armed confrontation broke out in Kabul in February 1993 as Rabbani and his allies fought a battle with *Hizb-e-Wahdat* in the Afshar district, resulting in the destruction of residential houses and the massacre of hundreds of Hazaras. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* was defeated because a number of its military commanders of Shia *Sayyed* background betrayed the leadership and aligned with Rabbani. The victorious militias pillaged and destroyed Hazara residences and captured many Hazara women to keep as war trophies. The war compelled Mazari to form an alliance, *Shura-e-Ali-e-Hambastagi* (Super Council of Solidarity), with Pashtun leaders of rival political groups such as *Hizb-e-Islami* led by Hikmatyar and *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat* led by Mojaaddadi and the Uzbek leader Dostam, of *Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami*, against a common enemy—the Tajiks.

Armed confrontations among warring factions continued and efforts began to make peace among them. Pakistan invited leaders of the warring factions to a meeting in Islamabad on March 7, 1993. An agreement was concluded to the effect that Rabbani's term was limited to eighteen months as head of state and Hikmatyar was given the

post of prime minister. On June 16, 1993, Hikmatyar was sworn in as prime minister, but he feared retribution from Rabbani and his allies and refused to go to Kabul. Instead, he maintained his headquarters in Charasyab, a few miles outside of Kabul and traveled to Kabul as needed to meet with Rabbani and other government officials. After signing the agreement in Islamabad, the leaders also visited Mecca, Saudi Arabia—the trip was intended to give the agreement an aura of sanctity and legitimacy. However, soon after the leaders returned home, they lapsed into their old ways of doing business. As political differences between Dostam and Rabbani worsened, the former severed ties with the latter and formed an alliance with Hikmatyar in January 1994, opposing Rabbani's leadership and demanding that he step down. Rabbani refused, and Hikmatyar continued to launch rockets on Kabul.

Islamic fundamentalists that were regarded by the West as freedom fighters in the 1980s engaged in a bloody civil war in the 1990s that led to the destruction of the country's infrastructure and transformation of Afghanistan into a wasteland. Warring factions seized men and women of rival groups as well as noncombatant civilian hostages, and raped and mutilated their captives. The mistreatment of their captives ranged from disfiguring their faces by gouging out eyes or cutting off ears and noses to locking them in metal containers, leaving them to die of starvation or dehydration.

As Hikmatyar continued to oppose Rabbani's leadership, Rabbani tried to discredit him by calling him a tool in Pakistan's strategic objective for dominating Afghanistan. However, Rabbani owed a great deal to Pakistan, which supported him and other Islamic groups in the late 1970s and 1980s. When Rabbani seized power he requested Pakistani General Hamid Gul, director general of the ISI (1987–89), accept the post of a senior political advisor to his government. Rabbani and Masoud had been supported by the ISI since the mid-1970s, although they depicted themselves as nationalists, patriots, and independent, and accused Pakistan of interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs. They strengthened the country's ties with Pakistan's neighbor, India, relying on the proverbial logic that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and also took steps to strengthen ties with Iran and Russia. Pakistan was not happy with Tajik dominance in Afghanistan and supported the Pashtun drive for political domination of the country, with the objective of eliminating secessionist tendencies on the part of its own Pashtuns and Baluchis in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, respectively.⁸

Hikmatyar countered Rabbani's propaganda, attacking him and Masoud as tools of India and Russia. Because Rabbani failed to eliminate Hikmatyar, they had no option but to reconcile with him, and again offered him the post of the prime minister. Hikmatyar accepted the offer this time and went to Kabul on June 26, 1996, to assume the office of the prime minister; nine members of his party were also appointed to the cabinet. Rabbani was pleased with this development and decided to solicit the support of other Pashtun leaders. He visited Jalalabad to persuade the Jalalabad *Shura* to support his leadership. However, Rabbani failed to reconcile political differences with Dostam and his ally Mazari, and they continued to oppose Rabbani's leadership and engaged in periodic confrontations with him.

A major feature of political development by the Islamic regime was their concerted effort to eliminate every vestige of modernity and secular development associated with past regimes. Instead of rebuilding war-torn infrastructure and civic institutions, the Islamic warriors imposed their vision of an Islamic society and forced people to abide by their rulings. Their policies forbade women's participation in the government and all activities outside the home. On August 27, 1993, the Government Office of Research and Decrees of the Supreme Court issued an order that all government departments must lay off female employees from their positions and close down schools and educational centers for women and girls, declaring such centers to be no different from whorehouses, promoting adultery and sexual promiscuity, and issuing a rigid code of conduct for women. The guidelines for women read as follows: "Women need not leave their homes at all, unless absolutely necessary, in which case, they are to cover themselves completely. They are not to wear attractive clothing and decorative accessories; do not wear perfumes; their jewelry must not make any noise; they are not to walk gracefully or with pride and in the middle of the sidewalk, are not to talk to strangers, are not to speak loudly or laugh in public; and they must always ask their husbands' permission to leave home."⁹

A significant number of *Wahabi* Arabs who fought the Soviet occupation army maintained close working relationships with the Islamic fundamentalists within and outside the government and assisted them in their efforts to further Islamicize an already Muslim society. Rabbani expressed his appreciation to these Arabs and granted them visas to remain in the country. However, when they forged closer working relationships with other fundamentalists such as Hikmatyar and the Taliban, Masoud lashed out at them, stating, "My *Jihad* faction did not have good relations with the Arab Afghans during the years

of *Jihad*. In contrast, they had very good relations with the factions of Abdulrab Rasul Sayyaf and Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. When my faction entered Kabul in 1992, the Arab Afghans fought in the ranks of Hikmatyar's forces against us. We will ask them (Arab) to leave our country. Bin Laden does more harm than good."¹⁰

The Islamic warriors fought a bitter war that destroyed the country's infrastructure and claimed the lives of thousands of people, pitting Shias against Sunnis and one ethnic group against another. Not a single ethnic group could claim it did not have a role in the destruction and murder of innocent people, including the murder and torture of members of its own ethnic community. All ethnic groups—Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and others—were equally responsible for the war and the violations of human rights, although many intellectuals tried to exonerate their own ethnic communities and blame others for the brutal war of ethnic cleansing. As the civil war continued, politically active individuals both inside and outside the country who opposed the war worked to make the international community aware of the extent of the war atrocities. Prominent radical organizations that denounced the brutal civil war included the Afghanistan Liberation Organization (ALO) and the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), publishing antiwar literature and organizing antiwar rallies and meetings in Pakistan and North America. The Islamic fundamentalists were eventually discredited and lost public support, leading to the emergence of the Taliban, which also declared opposition to the war. The failure of Hikmatyar to topple Rabbani caused Pakistan to revise its policies and provide financial and military support to the Taliban so it could seize power and defend Pakistan's strategic interests in Afghanistan.

THE TALIBAN: REASSERTION OF PASHTUN DOMINATION

The word *talib* means student (the noun plural is *taliban*), most of whom had studied in *madrasas* (religious schools) in Pakistan. The Taliban are mainly Pashtuns (Pashtuns ruled Afghanistan as early as 1747, except for nine months when Habibullah Kalakani seized power in 1929 and during Rabbani's rule from April 1992 to December 2001) and their struggle was intended to reassert Pashtun domination of Afghanistan. The Taliban did not transcend narrow Pashtun nationalism, and their fascist policies of rebuilding Pashtun hegemony caused Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and other ethnic groups to oppose and fight them. Pashtuns with pro-Soviet Khalq leanings and Pashtun

nationalist intellectuals, especially those associated with the political party *Afghan Millat*, which advocated a Pashtun nationalist ideology, supported the Taliban. The Taliban are Sunnis, and they vehemently reject the Shia faith of Islam, regarding its followers as *kafir* (infidel). They regarded other ethnolinguistic communities—the Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen—as inferior to Pashtuns. The Taliban adhere to a strict and extremist interpretation of Islamic *Sharia* law according to the India-based Deobandi School of thought founded by Mohammad Qasim Nanautawi (1833–77) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829–1905). The Deobandis believe in providing an education for younger generations of Muslims based on strict *Sharia* law. They also oppose a hierarchical order within the Muslims and have extreme views on the role of women, restricting their activities even in domestic settings.

The Deobandis established *madrasas* in Afghanistan and exerted their influence over social, cultural, and religious affairs. Deobandi *ulama* were invited to Kabul and participated in the coronation of King Zahir in 1933. The Taliban's interpretation of *Sharia* law is influenced and shaped by the traditions, culture, and code of conduct prevalent among conservative Pashtun tribal communities and by the influence of fundamentalist religious leaders in Pakistan. Prominent Pakistani cleric Sami al-Haq, a member of Pakistan's National Assembly, established *madrasas* in Pakistan that served as training centers for the Taliban leadership; in 1999 eight senior Taliban leaders had graduated from these *madrasas*. Sami al-Haq served as an ideological mentor for the Taliban's spiritual leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. He advised him on legal and international affairs as well as *Sharia* law, and recruited young Pakistanis to support the Taliban. Other prominent Pakistani clerics, including Fazl al-Rahman, head of *Jamaat-e-Ulama-e-Islami* (JUI), played a critical role in shaping Taliban religious views, and Hamid Gul, head of Pakistan's notorious ISI, shaped Taliban political views.

The Taliban drew much of its support from the rural areas and among refugees in cities in Pakistan, particularly regions bordering Afghanistan. Religious schools that were established in Pakistan for refugee children provided fertile ground for recruitment by the Taliban. Institutions that aided refugees and orphanages were funded by rich Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and these countries played an instrumental role in recruiting fighters for the cause of Islamic fundamentalism.

After consolidating its power base in Qandahar and nearby regions in the south in 1994, the Taliban awarded Mullah Omar the title of *Amir al-Mominin* (Commander of the faithful) and pledged *bayat*

(allegiance) to him, recognizing him as *Amir* of Afghanistan (the Taliban renamed the country the Emirate of Afghanistan). Mullah Omar further solidified his leadership by visiting a shrine that held a cloak widely believed to have been worn by the Prophet Muhammad. On April 4, 1996, he used his authority to remove the cloak from its display case and appeared in public wrapped in the cloak, driving an assembly of mullahs into a frenzy of adulation.¹¹ This action was sufficient to legitimize Mullah Omar's leadership and he called upon others to submit to his authority. The Taliban rank-and-file members regarded Mullah Omar as a saint chosen by God for his piety to deliver the people from the misery of a fratricidal war that had destroyed Afghanistan.

Mullah Omar was born into a poor family about 1959 in Nodeh Village in Qandahar. He is a member of the Hotak tribe of Ghilzai Pashtuns. His father died when he was young and his family settled in Trinkoot, Orazgan, in the 1980s. To support his family, he settled in a small village in the Maiwand district of Qandahar, where he became a mullah in a village mosque, teaching children the art of Quranic recitation and providing them with a rudimentary religious education. During the anti-Soviet insurgency, he left Qandahar and went to Peshawar, Pakistan, and supported *Hizb-e-Islami* led by Mohammad Yunus Khalis, participating in the guerrilla war under the command of Nik Mohammad. Mullah Omar sustained injuries and lost his right eye during a battle with the Soviets and the Afghanistan army.

The Taliban System of Governance

The Taliban's ascension to power coincided with the disintegration of the traditional tribal system of leadership and the crisis of legitimation on the part of Islamic fundamentalist leaders, who did not rule by consensus, but by bayonet, forcing people to submit to their rule. The breakdown of law and order created a power vacuum that the Taliban readily filled. Taliban rhetoric centered on restoring law and order and ridding Afghanistan of the warring factions. This appealed to people who had suffered under tyrannical Islamic rulers who brutalized innocent men, women, and children. The Taliban characterized their system of governance, the *Shura* (council) as the best system of leadership, a system based on consultation and consensus and the rejection of an individual at the top of the decision-making apparatus. Clerics associated with the *Shura* in Qandahar argued that the Taliban incorporated an earlier model of the Islamic system—consensus and consultation—in their system of administration. Resolution of

outstanding issues through consensus constituted the corollary of an earlier Islamic system, a common practice during the reign of the four Muslim caliphs.

The Taliban system of governance was actually based on tribalism rather than the earlier Islamic system of governance. Mullah Omar wielded considerable power, to the extent that without his advice and instruction, no one dared do anything independently. A high-ranking Taliban official stated, "Decisions are based on the advice of the *Amir al-Mominin*. For us, consultation is not necessary. We believe that this is in line with the *Sunnah*. We abide by the *Amir's* view even if he alone takes this view . . . There will not be a head of state. Instead, there will be an *Amir al-Mominin*. Mullah Mohammad Omar will be the highest authority, and the government will not be able to implement any decision with which he does not agree . . . General elections are incompatible with the *Sharia* and therefore we reject them. Instead, we consult with eminent scholars who fulfill certain conditions."¹² The Taliban excluded other ethnic and faith-based communities from participation in the government, regarding themselves to be the sole legitimate rulers, and refused to compromise with former *Jihadis*, viewing them as corrupt and useless, as they had failed to unite the people and make peace. The Taliban disliked commanders with an independent spirit, viewing them as a threat to their own agenda. They also rejected technocratic elites, considering them to be agents of imperial and regional powers, ignoring the fact that they themselves were nurtured and brought to power by Pakistan. With the help of Pakistan's ISI, the Taliban built their organizational capacity and seized much of the country until they collapsed in late 2001.

The Taliban leadership structure resembled that of the Iranian system, in which the supreme religious leader, Khomeini, dictated policy matters from his headquarters in the city of Qum, while clerics and technocrats ran the daily business of the country from Tehran. The Taliban's spiritual leader, Mullah Omar, likewise presided over a ten-member *Shura* headquartered in the city of Qandahar. He dictated the affairs of the country from there while clerics loyal to him managed and supervised the day-to-day affairs of territories controlled by the Taliban from Kabul. Members of the *Shura* were mainly individuals from the Pashtun Durani tribes; many were friends of Mullah Omar, except for Mawlawi Sayed Ghiyasuddin, who came from Badakhshan and lived among the Pashtuns. They were regarded as Qandaharis, although some came from the neighboring provinces of Ghor, Helmand, and Orazgan. Mullah Omar was the sole decision maker, even though a number of tribal elders, clerics, and military

commanders attended the *Shura's* meetings, primarily to give the impression that the *Shura* was an organization for collective leadership. After the Taliban expanded their territories they established regional *Shuras* that excluded non-Pashtun ethnic communities from the leadership circle. The Qandahar-based *Shura* supervised the work of the other *Shuras* and the cabinet. The military reported to the *Shura* and had to seek its approval for decisions regarding the day-to-day affairs of the government. Senior government officials in security and the army were Pashtuns from Qandahar. Later the Taliban appointed other Pashtun elites loyal to them as governors, judges, and administrative officers. Mullah Omar was wary that governors and provincial and district army commanders might try to carve out their own fiefdoms and shifted them regularly from one place to another. He also assigned them to the battlefield as commanders.

Taliban military commanders recruited their foot soldiers and the bulk of the recruits were mainly students of the *madrasas* in Pakistan. The commanders were responsible for their volunteer army, while the Taliban's professional army officers were members of the defunct pro-Soviet *Khalq* and were paid regular salaries. At first the Taliban foot soldiers were highly disciplined, but over time they became corrupt and were eventually seen as mercenaries who brutalized the people, pilfered private homes, and coerced people to pay bribes. When the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996 they replaced senior Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek officials with Pashtuns who lacked a rudimentary education or any qualifications to run government bureaucracies. State organizations remained open for business from eight in the morning until noon, when they would close so that state employees could say their afternoon prayers. Taliban officials held meetings in the evening to discuss the business of the day and come up with new strategies to fight their opponents. The judiciary in Taliban territories often consulted the *Shura* in Qandahar, seeking opinions on legal rulings, as they could not act independently. Judges from Taliban-controlled territories gathered in Qandahar once or twice a year to discuss legal and judicial issues. The Taliban claimed that their every action was in strict adherence with *Sharia* law and the *Quran*, and through their leadership they have remade Afghanistan into a true Islamic state.¹³

Based on their understanding of *Sharia* law, the Taliban banned every kind of entertainment, believing that such activities take people's thoughts and minds away from God. They closed down theaters and smashed television sets and videotape recorders, prohibited playing games of any type, and ordered people to refrain from keeping pigeons or flying kites. Taliban edicts required men to have long,

untrimmed beards, short hair, and wear traditional clothing such as the *Kamis-shalwar*. Anyone who shaved or trimmed his beard was subject to beatings and imprisonment until his beard grew out. Men were instructed to pray five times a day, preferably in a mosque. Taliban religious police carried whips, batons, and iron cables, beating citizens they observed violating the rules and forcing random men to go to the nearest mosque and say their prayers, even if they had just said their prayers in another mosque. In one instance, a man was forced to recite early afternoon and evening prayers three times in different mosques in the same locality. For this reason, most people avoided going out during prayer times. The Taliban also issued decrees that ordered people to remove photographs and other representational art of humans or animals from their houses, as they viewed such items as anti-Islamic. They decreed that people who commit robbery would have their hand chopped off and adulterers would be publicly flogged or stoned to death. The Taliban condemned homosexuality, regarding it as an aberration from Islamic law and severely punished those who engaged in such acts. Such actions did not achieve any real change and merely drove affected parties underground.

Since most rank-and-file members of the Taliban grew up in refugee camps in Pakistan, they lacked a rudimentary knowledge of their country's history, politics, and cultures, and had little memory of their kinfolk back home. The Taliban prohibited celebration of the New Year, regarding it as anti-Islam—even though it was an ancient tradition that was celebrated annually by Sunnis and Shias alike. They also prohibited Shias from celebrating the anniversary of the tenth day of Muharram, which memorialized Imam Husain, grandson of Prophet Muhammad, who was murdered in Karbala, Iraq.

The Taliban brand of Islam distorted Islam and denied the religion of its universal message of peace, tolerance, political and cultural pluralism, and diversity of faith. The Taliban portrayed themselves as true servants of the Islamic faith and declared that their mission was to purify society from sins and vices by implementing *Sharia* law and enforcing complete compliance to it. To implement their strict vision of *Sharia* law the Taliban created the *Amri Bilmarof wa Nahi al-Munkir* (Bureaucracy for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice). The department was headed by Mawlawi Qalamuddin, whose name everyone feared, as he was a ruthless man with no compassion for those whom the agency suspected of violating state rules and regulations. The agency recruited thousands of people with rudimentary *madrassa* educations to enforce *Sharia* law and work as informants. The agency was independent of the Ministry of Justice

and only took orders from Mullah Omar. Any decree issued by the agency was broadcast via Taliban-controlled Radio *Sharia*, formerly known as Radio Afghanistan. The Muslim world remained indifferent toward the Taliban and neither condemned their brutal policies of nation building as it related to women nor challenged the Taliban's rigid interpretation of *Sharia* law.

The Taliban were influenced by dogmatic and fundamentalist mullahs who taught a simple belief in puritan Islam and that women are evil temptations that derail one's thoughts from the right path, serving God. The Taliban-controlled Radio *Sharia* announced on September 28, 1996, that according to orders of the *Amir al-Mominin*, it is forbidden for women to work outside the home and girls are not allowed to pursue an education. The decree outraged women throughout the country. On December 21, 1996, women in Herat defied the Taliban order and demanded that they be allowed to work to feed their families, as many women were the sole wage earners for their families. Twenty women were arrested and forty sustained injuries in a clash with the Taliban religious police. Radio *Sharia* announced that 250 women were beaten for not abiding by the Islamic code of conduct. The Taliban justified repression: "It is a matter of pride for all Afghanistan that we have kept our women at home . . . The *Sharia* has described everyone's way of conduct. I mean that the *Sharia* allows for a woman to see a male doctor when she becomes ill. The fact of the matter is that no other country has given women the rights we have given them. We have given women the rights that God and his Messenger have instructed, that is to stay in their homes and to gain religious instructions in *hijab* [seclusion]."14

The Taliban imposed severe rules for women, requiring them to wear *chadari*, a garment that covers their body from head to toe with only a small lattice opening in the front for them to see where they are going. Taliban religious police beat women who did not cover their body from head to toe or who wore makeup or high-heeled shoes. Women were not allowed to leave the home unless accompanied by a male guardian, and taxi drivers were prohibited from picking up women who were not properly dressed; the driver was subject to severe punishment if he did not abide by Taliban law. The Taliban also banned the playing of music and singing of songs at weddings and other occasions, even those that were a common tradition in the past, and punished managers of wedding halls who allowed women to sing or dance. The Taliban also forbade women to see male doctors and issued guidance that they could only visit female doctors. In the absence of a female doctor, the Taliban permitted women to see

a male doctor on the condition that they be accompanied by a close male relative. The Taliban rule also required that during examination by a male doctor the female patient must be dressed in a *hijab* (veil). Male doctors were not allowed to touch a female patient except for the affected areas of her body. The rules also stipulated that female doctors and nurses must not enter the hospital ward where male patients are hospitalized. The Taliban refused to provide medical treatment to women in a hospital where men were also treated, but under international pressure they agreed to segregate hospital wards so that women could receive medical treatment separately from men.

The Taliban's brutality, particularly their treatment of women, incensed the international community, human rights groups, feminists, and women's organizations. Despite international criticism on the mistreatment of women, the Taliban defended their position and policies and regarded aid agencies as enemies of Islam. Taliban clerics appealed to Mullah Omar to expel all aid agencies, arguing that they are a network of spies working at the behest of Western imperial powers and contaminating the minds of believers by promoting Western cultural values. Although the Taliban did not close down the offices of most nongovernment organizations (NGOs), they demanded aid agencies follow their guidelines, a policy that forced aid agencies to compromise on the issue of female employment. Because the Taliban refused to allow women to work or attend school, a number of international aid agencies closed their offices in Taliban-held territories to protest their policies toward women. The Taliban lashed out against critics both local and international, particularly those who condemned the Taliban for violating basic human rights. The Taliban demanded that all parties wishing to communicate with them or discuss any human rights issues adhere to the precepts of the *Quran* and deal with them within the framework of the Islamic faith.¹⁵ To the Taliban, *Sharia* law was the constitution, and so they saw no need to draft a constitution to govern the country. According to the Taliban, *Sharia* law provided security and safety to the people and their property. They took great issue with the notion that their enforcement of *Sharia* law violated human rights, and viewed these assertions as an insult to Islam and Muslims.¹⁶

The Taliban argued that they supported an egalitarian system of governance that was practiced during the life of the prophet and his companions. In order to replicate the environment the prophet lived in centuries ago the Taliban banned political parties and political discourse and did not give salaries to government officials and military soldiers, although they provided soldiers with sufficient food, clothing,

and weapons to fight opposition groups. The Taliban claimed that they were entitled to carry out *Jihad*, put an end to years of war, and restore peace and stability that the people of Afghanistan wanted.¹⁷

The Taliban used revenues from the cultivation of poppies (opium) to finance the war on their opponents. Poppy cultivation became a common practice in the 1990s, as warlords allowed farmers to grow poppies and relied on the collected revenues to finance the tribal militias under their command. However, the warlords pocketed the bulk of the money and purchased houses, established businesses in Peshawar and Quetta, and transferred most movable assets to overseas bank accounts, even as they publicly denied any involvement in the production of drugs or drug trafficking. Poor farmers who had difficulty supporting their families because of skyrocketing prices and high inflation had no option but to cultivate poppies. They also had an added incentive to cultivate poppies—it is an easy and lucrative cash crop that requires less physical labor. It was mainly wealthy farmers with political and social links to the power structure who cultivated poppies, as the warlords used their position, allowing their men to cultivate opium on public lands and assisting the drug mafias in the smuggling of narcotics to international markets. The Taliban feared that banning the cultivation of opium would make farmers destitute and angry, so they institutionalized its cultivation and taxed them at harvest season. Islamic fundamentalists and the Taliban transformed Afghanistan into one of the major opium-producing countries in Asia. In 1996 the country produced 2,250 metric tons of opium, with Qandahar alone producing 120 metric tons. The drug economy generated an estimated US\$20 million in tax revenue for the Taliban, as truckloads of drugs passed through Qandahar and Herat to Pakistan and Iran and through Kabul and Jalalabad to central and south Asia. This and the smuggling of illegal consumer goods and merchandise through Afghanistan effectively crippled the country's local industries and economy.

Taliban and the War of Conquest

The Taliban began their campaign in 1994 when some two hundred Taliban warriors attacked Spin Boldak, a small border post south of Qandahar that was crucial for transporting goods between Quetta, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The warriors dislodged Hikmatyar's forces and seized small ammunition depots. The Taliban's victory in Spin Boldak alarmed Pashtun warlords in Qandahar and they condemned Pakistan for its role in supporting the Taliban, however, they could

not do anything to prevent the Taliban from waging war. After defeating their opponents, the Taliban seized control of Qandahar and established their headquarters there. Although the Taliban claimed that they were independent of Pakistan, their victory was welcomed by Pakistan as a step in its policy of propping up a powerful client to defend its strategic interest in Afghanistan. The Taliban victory in Qandahar inspired thousands of young Pashtun students studying in *madrasas* in Baluchistan and the NWFP to return to Afghanistan and support the Taliban in their struggle to topple the Tajik-dominated government in Kabul. Similarly a large number of young Pakistani students in religious schools volunteered to go to Qandahar and fight on the side of the Taliban.

The Taliban's seizure of Qandahar did not initially worry Rabbani and Masoud. They even supported them in their efforts to seize control of the southern regions from their potential adversaries, particularly *Hizb-e-Islami*, and did not oppose them until the Taliban began to pose a serious challenge to their ally Mohammad Ismail, in Herat. Rabbani and Masoud likely intended to use the Taliban's presence to exploit the rift between Pakistan's infamous intelligence agency, the ISI, and Hikmatyar, with the idea that the ISI would support them instead. The Taliban gradually expanded their rule and conquered more territories in the vicinity of Qandahar, including Orazgan and Zabol. In January 1995 they fought and defeated Ghafar Akhundzada, who was in charge of the opium-producing province of Helmand, and established their rule there.

When the Taliban moved closer to Kabul, Rabbani and Masoud finally saw their military advance, as well as attempts by other political opponents (*Hizb-e-Wahdat* and *Hizb-e-Islami*), as a potential threat to their power and launched an attack on *Hizb-e-Wahdat* positions west of Kabul on March 6, causing Mazari to make a deal with the Taliban and yield his front lines and weapons to the Taliban. Rabbani's forces fought the Taliban and forced them to retreat, leaving *Hizb-e-Wahdat* vulnerable to attacks by government forces. Continued military assaults on *Hizb-e-Wahdat* forced Mazari to send an envoy to the Taliban asking them to return their seized weapons so the Hazaras could defend themselves. The Taliban arranged a meeting in Gulbagh and Mazari and some of his senior advisors went there to meet Taliban officials for further discussions. The Taliban did not honor the agreement and instead murdered Mazari and his men on March 13, 1995. Supporters of Mazari claim that the Taliban pushed him out of a helicopter. Mohammad Karim Khalili succeeded Mazari as head of *Hizb-e-Wahdat*. Rabbani and his allies continued their

relentless military offensive on Taliban bases around Kabul, but the Taliban were determined to unseat Rabbani and seize Kabul.

In late February 1995 the Taliban captured Nimrooz and Farah in the west, further boosting their status, and threatening Rabbani's fledgling government. The ISI helped the Taliban reorganize their forces and repair their military ordnance, and even brokered an agreement between Dostam and the Taliban whereby Dostam sent technicians to Qandahar to repair Taliban jet fighters and helicopters. In September 1995 the Taliban defeated Ismail, the warlord of Herat, with aerial bombing from Dostam's jet fighters. Ismail, who was forced to leave the country for Iran, was despised by the people because of his autocratic style of leadership and rampant corruption. Rabbani accused Pakistan of helping the Taliban defeat his ally and organized an anti-Pakistan demonstration in Kabul. During the demonstration his supporters attacked the Pakistan Embassy and injured the ambassador.

After consolidating their rule over the western part of the country the Taliban focused on seizing territories in the east, launching a military offensive on Jalalabad, Nangarhar, on August 25, 1996, establishing their rule there. The takeover of Jalalabad was assisted by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, as both countries engineered "the surrender and eventual flight of the head of the Jalalabad *Shura*, Haji Abdul Qadir. He was given a large bribe, reported by some Afghans to be US\$10 million in cash, as well as guarantees that his assets and bank accounts in Pakistan would not be frozen."¹⁸ Haji Abdul Qadir fled to Pakistan on September 10, 1996, and the next day the acting governor of Jalalabad and his six bodyguards tried to cross the border to Pakistan, but the Taliban captured and murdered them. Pakistan opened its border with Afghanistan, providing pro-Taliban refugees with a way to return to Jalalabad to support the Taliban. The Taliban encountered little or no resistance when they captured Laghman and Kunar Provinces. When they marched on Kabul, Hikmatyar's forces in the Sorobi district abandoned their positions, allowing the Taliban to seize Kabul on September 26, 1996. Rabbani and Masoud had lost popular support, and abandoned their bases in Kabul, fleeing to the north and establishing the seat of government in Talian, Takhar. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* evacuated its forces from Kabul and established its base of operations in Bamiyan. Rabbani's predecessor, Mojaddadi, and many other Pashtun leaders of *Jihadi* backgrounds declared solidarity with the Taliban.

When the Taliban advanced on Kabul, Masoud instructed Mohammad Qasim Fahim, minister of the interior at that time, to offer former

Soviet puppet leader Najibullah and his brother Shahpoor Ahmadzai, still sheltered at the UN compound, to go with them to Panjshir, assuring their security. Najibullah refused the offer, as he believed that the Taliban would not harm him, a Pashtun, while he remained at the UN compound. After the Taliban seized Kabul, armed men entered the UN office and seized Najibullah and his brother, who served as his security chief. Early in the morning on September 27 the Taliban executed them and hanged their bodies on a pole in Ariyana square near the palace. In a gesture of contempt, they further defiled Najibullah's body by stuffing wads of Afghanistan currency into the pockets of his clothing as well as into his bodily orifices.¹⁹ The Taliban justified Najibullah's execution on the grounds that he was a Communist and a murderer. They banned a funeral for him, although some Pakistani Pashtuns loyal to Najibullah still organized a *fatihā* (funeral prayers) for him in Quetta and Peshawar the next day. Later the Taliban allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to deliver Najibullah's body for burial by his tribesmen, the Ahmadzais, in his birthplace of Paktiya.

It is believed that Gharzai Khowakhohzhai, who is currently deputy mayor of Kabul and once served as one of Karzai's presidential campaign organizers in 2004, is the person directly responsible for Najibullah's execution. Khowakhohzhai is from Qandahar and was an army officer and a member of the defunct pro-Soviet *Khalq* faction of *Hizb-e-Watan* (the former PDPA). He was arrested by Taliban authorities in Jalalabad in 1998 when Taliban leader Mullah Omar became suspicious of the growing involvement of *Khalqis* in the rank and file. Mullah Omar instructed his men to arrest those suspected of being *Khalqi*. During an interrogation Khowakhohzhai stated that former minister of defense Shah Nawaz Tanai and the ISI of Pakistan had encouraged him to work for the Taliban, and when the Taliban entered Kabul he and his men intended to murder Najibullah to avenge the death of his friend, Mohammad Asif Shoor, and others killed by Najibullah. Khowakhohzhai stated that he and his team took Najibullah and his brother to the palace and murdered them while Colonel Imam, head of the *Ghorzang* Party, and a number of Taliban, including Bahloul, stood by. Khowakhohzhai took pride in killing Najibullah, saying that he and his team had eliminated the last Russian agent and punished the man who was regarded to be the murderer of the nation.²⁰

Khowakhohzhai maintained that the Taliban and his own party, the *Ghorzang*, cultivated friendly ties with Pakistan and the United States, and with the support of these two countries the Taliban and

the *Ghorzang* were determined to seize power and restore peace in Afghanistan. He claimed that during his covert activities in Afghanistan he also successfully foiled sabotage plots by Masoud, Khalili, and Dostam, as well as Iranian and Russian agents, and that one of the significant tasks he had accomplished during his mission with the support of Pakistan and the resources of the *Ghorzang* was the establishment of closer working relations with commander Rasoul Pahlawan, so as to dislodge Dostam from power.²¹ Whenever differences emerged between the Taliban and the *Ghorzang*, the latter worked to neutralize the Taliban's efforts. *Ghorzang* also forged closer ties with the Taliban's opponents, including Dostam, Sayyaf, and Mansoor Naderi, and Masoud once provided US\$300,000 to Khowakhozhai for his services.²²

After seizing Kabul the Taliban established a six-member *Shura* that was presided over by Mullah Mohammed Rabbani. Its members were mainly Durani Pashtuns, excluding *ulama* from Kabul. The *Shura* members included Mullah Mohammad Ghaus, minister for foreign affairs, Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, minister for information, Mullah Sayed Ghiyasuddin Agha, Mullah Fazil Mohammad, and Mullah Abdul Razaq. After consolidating its bases in Kabul, the Taliban continued its military offensive to conquer territories in the north and overthrow Rabbani's government. The Taliban victory forced Rabbani and Masoud to reconcile their differences with *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, *Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami*, and other political groups to fight the Taliban and regain Kabul. They convened a grand meeting in the Khenjan district of Baghlan on October 10, 1996, and declared the formation of a *Shura-e-Ali Baray-e-Defay-e-Watan* (Supreme Council for the Defense of the Homeland) that became known as the Northern Alliance (NA).

The Taliban continued their military offensive toward the north on two fronts: in the Shamali area north of Kabul, and via positions in Herat and Badghis. In the political arena the Taliban exploited differences between Dostam and Abdul Malik. By bribing Malik and promising him a position of high authority, they persuaded him to switch sides and support the Taliban. Malik was assisted by his half-brother Gul Mohammad Pahlawan, Ghaffar Pahlawan, Majid Rozi, and other Uzbek commanders who were not happy with Dostam. On May 24, 1997, they marched into Mazar and defeated Dostam, forcing him to flee to Uzbekistan and later to Turkey. Malik's defection to the Taliban was intended to avenge the death of his brother Rasoul Pahlawan and some of his relatives at the hands of Dostam. When the Taliban moved into the city of Mazar they did not appoint Malik to a senior position as promised, which caused him to resent the Taliban and

work against them. On May 28, 1997, a group of Hazaras in Mazar refused to disarm, sparking a major armed confrontation between the Taliban and the Hazaras. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and Malik fought the Taliban and inflicted heavy casualties on them (an estimated six hundred dead and more than one thousand prisoners taken), forcing them to pull their forces from the city. Malik then established his leadership over Takhar, Faryab, Jawzjan, and Sar-e-Pol Provinces.

The Taliban threat compelled the NA to remain united in the struggle against them. On June 10, 1997, the alliance organized a meeting to discuss new strategies to fight the Taliban and appointed Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, a Mohammadzai Pashtun who earlier served as Afghanistan's envoy to the UN, as prime minister. Ghafoorzai intended to form a broad-based government involving tribal chiefs, leaders of the Islamic parties, and technocratic elites, and even invited the Taliban to join his government. He also decided to move the seat of government from Tالقان to Mazar, as that city had more facilities providing the government with communications access to the outside world, and to organize a *Loya Jirga* to discuss the future of Afghanistan. Ghafoorzai's appointment was a calculated strategy by Rabbani and his allies to counter the barrage of criticism that Pashtuns had been marginalized in the government, as well as to use his experience at the UN to rally international support for the government. Ghafoorzai was killed on August 21, 1997, when a helicopter carrying him and a number of senior members of the NA to Bamiyan crashed as it landed at the airport there. Despite internal differences, the anti-Taliban coalition rallied in support of Rabbani, whom the international community continued to recognize as the head of state. However, internal political and personal differences among leaders of the NA ultimately rendered its early efforts ineffective, as its members failed to merge their forces.

Dostam returned to Afghanistan in September 1997 and established his headquarters in Shibarghan with the support of some members of the anti-Taliban coalition, particularly the Shia Hazaras, who were dismayed by Malik. Initially Dostam reconciled his differences with Malik in order to buy time, consolidate his position, and win over individuals in the Malik camp who were unhappy. Dostam later fought and defeated Malik and forced him to flee the country to Iran. Armed clashes between the Taliban and the NA continued unabated. To augment Taliban manpower, Mullah Omar appealed to students in Pakistan to come to Afghanistan and help fight their enemies. During a military assault on Mazar on August 8, 1998, the Taliban defeated Dostam and *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and seized control of the city. Reports

indicate that the Taliban army massacred between two thousand and five thousand civilians, mainly Shia Hazaras.²³ The ferocious Taliban attack also led to the death of nine Iranian diplomats stationed in the city and the arrest of several Iranian nationals who were subsequently accused of supporting the anti-Taliban alliance.

The Taliban launched a military offensive on the Kayan district of Baghlan, forcing Ismaili warlord Mansoor Naderi to flee to Uzbekistan and later to Britain. On September 13, 1998, they attacked the *Hizb-e-Wahdat* stronghold in Bamiyan and seized control of the city. Taliban militias massacred hundreds of innocent men and women and burned their houses. On September 18 they dynamited the face of the smaller Buddha statue in Bamiyan, viewing the statue as a symbol alien to Islamic traditions and culture (on February 26, 2001, the Taliban destroyed the larger statue of Buddha standing in Bamiyan). Khalili and his supporters abandoned Bamiyan and Mohammad Akbari, who earlier split from *Hizb-e-Wahdat* and formed a new party, *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Milli-e-Islami* (Islamic Party of National Unity), allied with the Taliban. Although *Hizb-e-Wahdat* fought and captured Bamiyan in April 1999, it lost control of the city when the Taliban deployed reinforcements and again seized the city in May 1999. *Hizb-e-Wahdat* captured the district of Yakawlang of Bamiyan between late December 2000 and early January 2001, but lost it again when the Taliban deployed reinforcements and seized the district on January 8, 2001, killing hundreds of Hazara men, women, and children in the process.

The Taliban welcomed *Wahabi* militants to Afghanistan, provided them with shelters and training facilities, and forged a closer working relation with Osama bin Laden, head of the *Al-Qaeda* organization, whose members had participated in the armed struggle against the Soviets in the 1980s. After the Soviet troop withdrawal, bin Laden and a number of Arabs left to fight for the establishment of Islamic regimes in their own home countries. After Iraq invaded Kuwait and the United States deployed forces to the Middle East and stationed a contingent of its forces in Saudi Arabia to liberate Kuwait, bin Laden criticized the Saudi ruling family for allowing the United States access to bases in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's critical remarks caused the Saudi leadership to expel him in 1992. He settled in Sudan and supported the Islamic movement headed by Hassan Turabi. Saudi Arabia revoked bin Laden's citizenship in 1994 and exerted pressure on the Sudanese government to expel him. When bin Laden was asked to leave Sudan, he contacted the Taliban, and the Taliban's spiritual leader, Mullah Omar, sent him an invitation to come to Afghanistan. Bin Laden responded to Mullah Omar and his ally Khalis, saying "there

is no lion in the world, only Mawlawi Khalis, because you gave me shelter, there is no better place in the world than Qandahar because Mullah Omar, you have announced *Sharia* and you are the hero of Islam.”²⁴ In May 1996 bin Laden, his wives, thirteen children, and a group of Arab militants accompanied him on a chartered flight to Jalalabad, where he remained under Taliban protection. In 1997 he settled in Qandahar, the headquarters of the Taliban. To further cement relations with the Taliban, bin Laden used his wealth to buy their loyalty, building a house for Mullah Omar’s family, providing money to senior and junior Taliban leaders, and instructing members of *Al-Qaeda* to support the Taliban against the NA. The Saudi leadership encouraged more fundamentalist *Wahabi* Arabs to fight in Afghanistan because they wanted to avoid any confrontation with the home grown militant *Wahabis*, and provided them with financial support so that these groups and individuals would take their crusade outside of the Saudi kingdom.

By 2001 the Taliban had established its rule throughout the country, except for a few provinces in the northeastern regions that remained under control of the NA. The Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* were determined to conquer the entire country and transform Afghanistan into a base for exporting their brand of Islamic radicalism abroad. They organized a force of three thousand Pakistanis, one thousand Uzbeks of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), hundreds of Arabs, Chechens, Kashmiris, Chinese, and Filipinos, and launched a major offensive on Talian. After 33 days of fighting, killing an estimated 700 men and wounding some 1,300 NA fighters, they captured the city. The Taliban were determined to remove the primary obstacle to the implementation of their policies—Masoud—at any cost, and to this end they plotted his assassination. On September 9, 2001, two Arab militants posing as journalists arranged an interview with Masoud. During the interview they detonated explosive devices, killing him instantly. It is alleged that Masoud’s closest aides had a role in his assassination. Two days later (September 11, 2001) supporters of *Al-Qaeda* attacked the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, using commercial airplanes as weapons of mass destruction.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD *JIHADIS* AND THE TALIBAN

In the 1980s the United States provided billions of dollars in aid to the Islamic fundamentalists to fight the Soviets as well as humanitarian aid to refugees in Pakistan. Because Pakistan distributed the bulk of the U.S. aid to the Islamic fundamentalists, the United States decided

to provide aid directly to commanders, bypassing Pakistan as an intermediary. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) knew who the commanders were and how to reach them and provided monthly cash payments ranging from \$5,000 for lower ranking commanders to \$50,000 for senior commanders, who were then obligated to furnish the CIA with monthly progress reports regarding their military operations against the Soviets and to report cash or any type of assistance provided to them by Pakistan.²⁵ The United States provided Stinger antiaircraft missiles to the fundamentalists to turn the tide of the war in their favor and tried to ensure that no Stingers fell into the hands of the enemy. However, by early 1987 the Soviets, and later the Iranians, managed to obtain a few Stingers.

In the post-Soviet period the United States closed down its support program for the Islamic warriors but continued to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions of refugees in Pakistan. The reduction of U.S. aid caused the Islamic fundamentalists to seek support from conservative Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Islamic charity organizations, and *Al-Qaeda*. *Wahabi* Arabs were the main financiers of the Islamic fundamentalists and helped their leaders propagate *Wahabi* politics and ideology. For example, Sayyaf went further than the fight in Afghanistan and provided support and training to Islamic fundamentalist organizations in the Philippines. The organization *Abu Sayyaf* was named after him.

The United States was unhappy with some of the warlords and with the government of Rabbani and his aide Masoud because of their close ties to Iran and Russia. They indirectly supported the Taliban through its regional allies, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, because the Taliban was considered a potential adversary of Iran and a reliable U.S. ally against Iran—the United States did not view the Taliban as anti-United States even though it characterized their views as backward and antimodern. The Taliban did not share the same language—Persian—or religious beliefs with the Shia-dominated leadership in Iran, where the vast majority of people speak Persian. After the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996, the United States decided to deal with them as the new authority in Kabul and to inform them that the United States was prepared to consider the Taliban's concerns, while at the same time expressing concern about human rights, narcotics, and terrorism.

The U.S.-based oil company Unocal resumed its negotiations with the Taliban on the building of a gas pipeline for exporting oil from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan. Unocal had an office in Qandahar and provided US\$900,000 to the Afghanistan Studies Center at the University of Nebraska–Omaha. The center established a school in

Qandahar that trained four hundred teachers, electricians, pipe fitters, and other trades to enable Unocal to construct the pipeline. Former U.S. ambassador to the Islamic warriors Robert Oakley was instrumental in securing support from Moscow and Islamabad for the project and helped Unocal hire experts that included former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad (2003–5), Martha Bill Olcott, and others. Khalilzad supported U.S. engagement with the Taliban, arguing that the Taliban was not anti-United States and did not pose a threat to the United States as did the Islamic regime of Iran, because the Taliban are close to Saudi Arabia, a staunch U.S. ally in the Middle East. Other Americans of Afghani heritage also jumped on the bandwagon, raising funds and organizing rallies in support of the Taliban. CIA operative Gary Schroen flew to Qandahar and met with Taliban officials about the prospect of them purchasing Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. The Taliban made it clear to him that they would need the Stingers in the future, after they ended the war with the NA, to use against Iran and shoot down Iranian helicopters and aircraft.²⁶

Efforts by Unocal to build a pipeline did not materialize, as the United States expressed interest in building a trans-Caspian pipeline instead and also focused on capturing Osama bin Laden, demanding the Taliban extradite him to the United States to stand trial. The United States accused bin Laden of orchestrating the attack on the USS *Cole* in a port in Yemen and the bombing of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar al-Salaam in August 1998, which killed 220 people. When the Taliban refused to cooperate and close down bin Laden's training camps, the Clinton administration, on August 20, 1998, fired cruise missiles at the camps in Khost and Jalalabad in the eastern part of Afghanistan and on a pharmaceutical complex in Sudan. The cruise missiles destroyed a number of training camps and killed a number of Pakistanis and some ISI staff, but failed to kill bin Laden, as *Al-Qaeda* fled the region in advance. The United States offered a \$5 million in reward for bin Laden's capture, dead or alive. When Ahmad Shah Masoud asked about launching cruise missiles on a Taliban training center in Darunta, U.S. officials told him the following: "Not to take any such action without explicit U.S. authorization. In the spring of 2000, after the CIA had sent out officers to explore possible closer relationships with both the Uzbeks and the Northern Alliance, discussions took place in Washington between U.S. officials and delegates sent by Masoud. The Americans agreed that Masoud should get some modest technical help so he could work on U.S. priorities, collecting intelligence on and possibly acting against *Al-Qaeda*."²⁷

U.S. frustration with the Taliban's refusal to hand over bin Laden caused the United States to fund the NA in the fight against the Taliban, but they did not provide sufficient funds to enable it to overthrow them. Senior U.S. officials opposed providing aid to the NA alone and wanted the Pashtun opponents of the Taliban to get a large portion of the aid.²⁸

Bin Laden became a household name among fundamentalist Muslims; in the NWFP, young Pakistani boys wore T-shirts bearing his portrait and name, and some families named their baby boys after him. The United States requested Saudi Arabia press the Taliban to hand over bin Laden, but the Taliban refused, saying that he was a guest of Afghanistan and they must abide by the established traditional rules as a host country. Taliban reluctance to acquiesce to the Saudi's demand caused the latter to suspend diplomatic ties with the Taliban and cut off its financial assistance. As U.S. pressure mounted on the Taliban to hand over bin Laden there were rumors that the Taliban leadership restricted his movements after 1998 and prevented him from mounting attacks on U.S. targets. The Taliban said they would surrender him to a third country or try him in existing courts in Afghanistan if the United States submitted evidence to prove that he had a hand in the bombing of the two U.S. embassies and other charges against him. The U.S. government rejected the offer and insisted that the Taliban extradite him to the United States.

In October 1999 the United States persuaded the UN Security Council to pass a resolution demanding that the Taliban hand over bin Laden. In December 2000 the UN passed another resolution that imposed sanctions on the Taliban, freezing their assets, banning the country's Ariyana Airlines from operating outside Afghanistan, and prohibiting the sale of arms to the Taliban. The UN enforced the sanctions by monitoring Afghanistan's borders for arms deliveries, while still allowing arms supplies to flow to the Taliban's opponents. Later the Taliban tried to negotiate a deal with the United States, saying that they were ready to allow bin Laden to leave the country if the United States was ready to recognize the regime, but the United States insisted on bin Laden's unconditional extradition.

As negotiations between the United States and the Taliban faltered, the latter further cemented relations with *Al-Qaeda* and provided shelter to Islamic militants from around the world, and also permitted Chechen terrorists to set up an embassy in Kabul on January 16, 2000. *Al-Qaeda* mobilized foreign Islamic fighters into a special unit, Brigade 555, that served as the backbone of the Taliban military as they continued to fight the NA. The Taliban's supreme leader was

indignant at the U.S. leadership for portraying the Taliban as evil. He tried to convince the United States that the Taliban did not pose a threat, and that Iran was the major threat to U.S. interests in the region. He sent a letter to Bill Clinton on September 6, 1999:

When you say that the Taliban are fundamentalists or they are strict Muslims and that is why you are against them, it means that you are against Islam, although you may say that you do not have any animosity towards Islam. If you look at the history of thousands of years, anyone who has become an enemy of Islam has gained nothing instead of harming himself. Whatever we are—even if we are as you say fundamentalists—we are far away from you and we do not intend to harm you and cannot harm you either . . . And it is possible that your strict position regarding us might be flawed . . . if we were overthrown, there would be major chaos and confusion in the country . . . Furthermore, if we are overthrown, Afghanistan would be used by Iran. And Iran is such a harmful terrorist nation that there is no other nation like it in the world. As it is, despite what you think, even now we have posed no problem for you as has Iran. So, if despite these clarifications, you still say that we are to be blamed and you consider that you are right, what can we say, except that God alone knows who is really to be blamed and may God punish the guilty with storms and earthquakes.²⁹

The Taliban's growing strength emboldened their sympathizers in the Afghanistan Embassy in Washington, DC, to oppose officials loyal to the government of Rabbani. Seraj Jamal, a deputy in the embassy, revolted against the ambassador, Yar Mohabbat, when he was away on holiday for Memorial Day weekend in 1997. Jamal and his men occupied the second story of the building and pledged allegiance to Mullah Omar, while Mohabbat remained on the ground floor supporting Rabbani. After U.S. mediation failed to broker an agreement between Jamal and Mohabbat, the State Department summoned the two men for a meeting in August and told them that the United States had decided to close down the embassy because the international community had suspended recognition of the government in Afghanistan.³⁰ President Clinton distanced himself from the Taliban during the presidential campaign, ostensibly for repressing women, as he sought to avoid alienating U.S. feminists and women's rights activists. However, he left the door open for negotiation with the Taliban, and in January 1998 he sent Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the UN, to Afghanistan to inform the Taliban that they had to change their policies, otherwise they would not gain international recognition and the United States would not be able to work with them. Despite

the stern rebuke, the United States was motivated to support the Taliban, albeit covertly; they shared Washington's enmity toward Iran and their support was critical to the success of any plans for a central Asian pipeline that bypassed Iran. The U.S. Congress quietly authorized US\$20 million to the CIA dedicated to destabilizing Iran, while publicly denying Iranian accusations that the United States was funding the Taliban. The United States also declined to openly take sides in the civil war, despite Benazir Bhutto's requests via intermediaries that they intervene on behalf of Pakistan and the Taliban.³¹

When supporters of *Al-Qaeda* attacked the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, the United States decided to topple the Taliban and eliminate *Al-Qaeda*. The United States began to prepare a plan of action and convinced central Asian countries to allow the United States to use their air bases to launch attacks on the Taliban. The United States worked to facilitate the return of ex-king Mohammad Zahir, who had resided in Rome, Italy, since he was deposed in 1973. A delegation was sent to Rome to discuss U.S. policy objectives with Zahir and seek his support for the U.S. postwar reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Robert McFarlane, who was Ronald Reagan's national security advisor, and Joseph Ritchie, a multimillionaire Chicago businessman who made his fortune in options trading and who had grown up in Afghanistan, flew to Rome to visit the frail and gentle old monarch . . . [Ritchie's brother James] who runs a philanthropic organization designed to help Afghanistan . . . gave Zahir \$100,000 to help maintain his office. McFarlane gave him a few ideas. Write President Bush a letter expressing your . . . resolve to return to your native country; go on the radio and call for your compatriots to rescue themselves from tyranny. These suggestions the old king implemented. In short order, the United States was embracing the king's aims, and he began receiving all sorts of important visitors: Richard Haass, the State Department's policy coordinator for Afghanistan; a congressional delegation headed by the Pennsylvania Republican Curt Weldon; Frances Vendrell, the United Nations special representative for Afghanistan; William Pope, the American chargé d'affaires in Rome. Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf invited him to Islamabad. Afghan-born tribal chiefs (even those of the Northern Alliance, whose feisty members are by no means universally warm toward the monarch) came to Rome to discuss a proposed new government, how it would be formed, who would get the lion's share of power.³²

By early October 2001 an agreement was concluded that an emergency supreme council would be formed in which half of the representation would be given to the NA and the other half would be given to the ex-king's men and his supporters. By November 2001 the United States and UN officials assured the ex-king that they supported his return to Afghanistan as an interim leader.

The United States also forged closer working relations with the younger generation of NA leaders in the fight against the Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* and authorized the CIA provide cash to them to secure their loyalty. The CIA team, carrying communications gear and US\$3 million in hundred dollar bills, chartered a Russian Mi-17 helicopter and flew to Panjshir to meet them.³³ One of the anti-Taliban figures the CIA was interested in meeting was Sayyaf. The CIA officer described his encounter with him in these words:

I produced a \$100,000 bundle of cash from my backpack and handed it across the table to Sayyaf, who instinctively took the package. Unlike the money I had passed to the Northern Alliance, I had left this bundle in its original clear plastic wrapping so that Sayyaf could see what it was. Sayyaf held the bundle for a second or two, looking at it, seeming somewhat confused by what he was holding in his hands. Then his eyes widened and he turned toward his hulking aide. He literally threw the bundle of cash at the man, as if he had been handed a hot potato. Sayyaf looked at me and his eyes narrowed. "That is the first time I have ever accepted cash directly from anyone." He shook his head as if he had been tricked, eyeing me carefully, a slight smile on his lips.³⁴

The CIA official also arranged a meeting with Defense Minister Mohammad Qasim Fahim to discuss U.S. policy and strategy regarding ousting the Taliban and to present Fahim with \$1 million in cash, with the assurance that more money was available. Arif and Abdullah were also present; Abdullah served as translator for Fahim.³⁵ In the process of meeting senior leaders of the NA the CIA also worked to free Western hostages held by the Taliban in Kabul. The CIA operative provided US\$250,000 to his local contact person, Arif, to negotiate with high-ranking Taliban officials in the intelligence bureau in Kabul, and they succeeded in freeing the staff of Shelter Now. The Taliban arrested them on August 3, 2001, on charges of distributing Christian literature and converting Muslims to the Christian faith. The hostages held in a Kabul prison included four European and two American women—Heather Mercer, twenty-five years old, and Dayna, thirty years old.³⁶

The CIA took pains to disseminate the awards evenly among the leaders of the NA so as not to cause any resentment or ill will that might hamper U.S. efforts in their fight against the Taliban. A CIA officer who was unable to travel to Balkh to deliver a US\$250,000 award to warlord Atta Mohammad Noor asked Defense Minister Fahim to do it for him.³⁷ Preparation for military offensives by U.S. and NATO forces against the Taliban provided opportunities for former warlords Dostam, Khalili, and Mohammad Ismail to return to Afghanistan with the intention of reestablishing their leadership. When the NA leaders were invited to the United States, they tried to demonstrate that they were still a major power and that the United States could rely on them in the war against terrorism and the Taliban. The head of the group, Abdullah, wanted Masoud's brother Ahmad Wali Masoud to accompany him to Washington, but the CIA was uncomfortable with the request; it did not feel that either brother, Ahmad Wali Masoud or Ahmad Zia Masoud, possessed the political skills to effectively represent the NA in an international forum. Abdullah pointed out that having a close member of the Masoud family involved would legitimize the visit, as well as demonstrate the unity and strength of the NA.³⁸

The United States was cautious not to topple the Taliban regime immediately because it wanted to mobilize support for the war on terrorism among the Pashtuns in the south and east in order to prevent the NA from seizing Kabul after the Taliban abandoned the city—a scenario that the United States believed might upset Pakistan, which despised the NA. The United States intended to work in close consultation with Pakistan. With gradual bombing of Taliban positions in the north over several weeks, while leaving their frontlines untouched, the United States intended to build Pashtun support in the south; the CIA was already working to expedite the process there.

Organizing Pashtun resistance in the south was a policy intended to balance the post-Taliban political development process.³⁹ The United States supported Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun from Qandahar and a trusted man whom the United States had chosen to assume power. After the United States rallied support for him among the Pashtuns in the south, it planned to bomb the Taliban positions in Kabul and drive them out of the city. Karzai was accompanied by a special U.S. Green Beret team and went to the southern region of Afghanistan for a short time, but the Taliban was informed and tried to lay siege to the region. Karzai returned to Pakistan, stating that he was brought back for political consultation. The United States was trying to establish a basis of legitimacy for Karzai as a strong candidate for the leadership post.

The United States attempted to set up an anti-Taliban front in the eastern part of the country, but erred in their decision to support former militia Commander Abdul Haq. CIA reports depicted him as a poseur and self-promoter who lacked a significant affiliation to a tribal base that could provide him support. Analysts were skeptical of the ability of “Hollywood Haq,” as he was derisively known, to organize an anti-Taliban resistance in Jalalabad. Nonetheless, the United States engineered Abdul Haq’s return to Jalalabad, and he was soon captured and executed by Taliban militias.⁴⁰

The Panjshiri faction of the NA was the only organized group that continued to fight the Taliban, and U.S. officials were concerned that after the collapse of Taliban rule in Kabul they would move to seize control of the city. A CIA field operative had some difficulty convincing Fahim, in particular, of U.S. apprehension if they moved their forces to Kabul, as the United States did not want to see the Tajiks gain a political advantage over the Pashtuns. Although the NA seized Kabul against U.S. wishes, they relied on the United States for support, which was a major factor in securing their loyalty. The CIA spent US\$5 million in a little over a month in the Panjshir Valley. Some of the money went to essential supplies and equipment, but the vast majority went to Afghan allies for their discretionary use. According to the CIA, the money was well spent when measured against the gains—the debilitation and collapse of the military strength of the Taliban, disruption of critical elements of the *Al-Qaeda* organization, and Afghanistan itself became less of a haven for terrorists.⁴¹

PAKISTAN-IRAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Conventional thinking in Pakistan leadership circles regarded the Soviet invasion as part of Soviet expansionism toward the Indian Ocean. To create an effective deterrent to its southward expansion, Pakistan supported Islamic fundamentalists to fight the Russians, provided asylum to political opponents of the Soviet-backed regime, and solicited international support for the Islamic fundamentalists. Pakistani generals often lobbied members of the diplomatic community in Pakistan to provide arms to the Islamic warriors. The Pakistani operative in charge of the program that liaised with the Islamic fundamentalists reflected on this issue: “Every year General Akhtar and I would go to the Chinese embassy for dinner after the official signing of the arms protocol, whereby China agreed to supply us with specified types and quantities of weapons and ammunition for the *Mujahidin*. This was typical Chinese. They always insisted on absolute accuracy

in all their dealings . . . From 1984 through to 1987, over 80,000 *Mujahidin* went through our training camps, hundreds of thousands of tons of weapons and ammunition were distributed, while active operations were being planned and carried out in all of the 29 provinces in Afghanistan.”⁴²

Islamic fundamentalists remained divided and failed to produce a strong leader that could mobilize the people in support of their policies. Pakistan expressed its displeasure with the current state of affairs and tried to unite the leaders of the Islamic fundamentalist parties. By early 1984 the ISI exerted tremendous pressure on these leaders to unite, and even invited the Saudi chief of intelligence, Turki al-Faisal, to use his influence over these leaders to convince them to come together. When their efforts did not produce any results, Pakistan’s military leader General Zia al-Haq threatened the leaders and issued a directive to these leaders to form a Seven-Party Alliance within seventy-two hours and issue a joint statement regarding its formation.⁴³

Pakistan received a substantial amount of U.S. aid, the bulk of which was in the form of cash. Saudi Arabia also provided financial assistance to the Islamic parties and matched every dollar the United States contributed; the combined U.S.-Saudi financial support was several million dollars annually. The CIA transferred the money to a secret account in Pakistan that remained under the strict supervision and control of the ISI. This money was not part of the money used for purchasing arms and munitions.⁴⁴ Pakistan favored Islamic fundamentalists and provided the bulk of international aid to them, however, it also distributed portions of the aid to so-called moderate Islamic parties. For example, “In 1987 the broad percentages allocated to the parties were Hikmatyar 18–20 percent, Rabbani 18–19 percent, Sayyaf 17–18 percent, Khalis 13–15 percent, Nabi 13–15 percent, Gilani 10–11 percent, and Mojaddadi trailing with 3–5 percent. Certainly the fundamentalist came out on top with 67–73 percent, much to the CIA’s chagrin, but using strictly military criteria it would never be otherwise.”⁴⁵ The United States did not provide military equipment to the Islamic parties, but helped in the procurement of military ordnance from other countries, a great deal of it coming from Egypt, China, and later Israel, despite the fact that Israel did not have good relations with the Arabs.⁴⁶ Arms were also purchased from India—a longtime ally of the Soviets and the Kabul regime. In 1984 the CIA secured and financed one hundred thousand rifles for the Islamic fundamentalists via Karachi, Pakistan. Mohammad Yousaf of the ISI met with CIA officials and questioned why India would

participate in such a transaction. Their response to him was that India would betray their own mothers for money.⁴⁷

Pakistani intelligence officers were actively involved in training Islamic warriors, and even visited Afghanistan to oversee the military operations against the Soviets (if they were captured they were disavowed by the Pakistan government). Until the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, no Americans were involved in providing military training to Islamic fundamentalists, however, Americans trained Pakistani instructors in the use of the new weapons, particularly antiaircraft weapons, and the Pakistanis then trained Islamic warriors. Between 1983 and 1987 the number of Pakistan-based training camps grew from two camps with two hundred trainees to seven camps that cycled through a thousand trainees a month. By 1987 more than 80,000 *Mujahidin* had been trained in these camps: 20,000 in 1984, 17,000 in 1985, and 19,400 in 1986; thousands of others were trained by Pakistanis inside Afghanistan. General Akhtar did not allow outside visitors into these camps. However, he eventually allowed CIA officials to be admitted. This concession was not provided to other officials or other nations' representatives or agents, with the single exception of Senator Humphrey, who visited a Stinger missile school in 1987.⁴⁸

The ISI was heavily involved in the covert operation against the Kabul regime. Its subversive activities included sabotage and assassination of senior government officials. The ISI even tried to assassinate Soviet-backed leader Najibullah in 1985, when he was head of the state intelligence bureau, KHAD. With the help of a member of KHAD who was sympathetic to the Islamic fundamentalists, an agent obtained details of Najibullah's planned visit to the Indian Embassy in Kabul, smuggled explosives to Kabul, purchased a car under an alias, placed the bomb inside the car, and parked the car near the Indian Embassy. Najibullah was forty minutes late and the bomb detonated before his arrival; the agent escaped in a getaway car.⁴⁹

Iran supported the Islamic insurgency in the 1980s and backed Rabbani when he seized power in 1992. Iran was determined to counter Pakistan's and Saudi Arabia's political influence on Afghanistan and decided to support Persian-speaking communities and the Shias. Officials mediated between different factions of *Hizb-e-Wahdat* as well as between Dostam and *Hizb-e-Wahdat* to try to get them to unite, but the warring factions would not compromise. Iranian support for the NA prompted the Taliban to provide sanctuary to Iranian minority Sunni Muslims from Khorasan and Sistan who were agitating for the overthrow of Shia rule. Iran accused Pakistan of aiding the Taliban, sending disguised troops to Afghanistan to support them. Iran

remained supportive of the NA and sent them money and arms to fight the Taliban. When the Taliban seized Kabul in September 1996 they shut down the Iranian Embassy in June 1997, accusing Iran of destabilizing the country. Iran viewed the Taliban as a formidable foe created by the United States to undermine the clerical system and eliminate the Shias as a significant power in Afghanistan.

Iran was on the brink of war with Afghanistan in September 1998 when the Taliban killed eight Iranian diplomats and an Iranian journalist, and held another fifty Iranian citizens captive. This caused the Iranian leadership to mobilize a large number of elite troops for a one-month military exercise near the border with Afghanistan in an effort to compel the Taliban to release Iranian hostages and extradite those who were responsible for killing Iranian diplomats. A combination of the Iranian threat of war and UN pressure forced the Taliban to free the Iranian prisoners and return the dead bodies of the diplomats. Iran continued to view the Taliban as a threat to its strategic interests in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and central Asia, and continued its support of the Tajik-dominated government of Rabbani, allowing refugees to remain and work in Iran and maintaining its support of Shia client parties.

CHAPTER 6



POST-TALIBAN POLITICS OF RECONSTRUCTION

NATION BUILDING UNDER THE AEGIS OF U.S.-NATO OCCUPATION

Armed confrontations among *jihadis* (Islamic warriors) continued throughout the 1990s with no end in sight. The people condemned the warring factions, calling for a leader to liberate them, put an end to their suffering, and above all, facilitate the country's integration into the international community. The attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States heralded the beginning of a new period in Afghanistan's dark history, as the United States decided to overthrow the Taliban for sheltering *Al-Qaeda* and supporting terrorism internationally. President George W. Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney, and their neoconservatives with strong ties to the oil industry seized the opportunity to pursue their own ends—dismantling the terrorist bases and capturing the ringleader, Osama bin Laden, in Afghanistan.

The United States declared that it would establish democracy, rebuild the country's infrastructure, and defend human rights, with particular focus on liberating women and young girls from Taliban oppression, not recognizing that women also suffered under the Northern Alliance (NA) when they ruled the country prior to the Taliban seizing power. The U.S. tendency to see itself as a force for liberation and modernization derives from its long-standing colonial mentality, and the belief that people in the periphery need imperial powers to rescue them and to articulate their needs. People whose lives were shattered during the civil war naively believed that the United States would restore peace and bring economic prosperity, and initially welcomed the intervention. However, the United States put aside its own stated values when it formed an alliance with the NA, the

anti-Taliban coalition force that is equally responsible for the destruction of the country and violation of human rights. The rebuilding of Afghanistan was not the prime objective of the war; rather the focus was on dismantling terrorist networks, capturing their leaders dead or alive, and maintaining a U.S. military presence in the region.

To build a coalition President George W. Bush said that “every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism, will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”¹ Bush described the ferocity of the forthcoming military assault on the Taliban during remarks he made on September 13, 2001, stating that “we are going to rain holy hell on them.” The United States launched a military offensive codenamed Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001, bombing Taliban positions and causing Taliban officials in Pakistan to plead with the United States to stop the air strikes so they could convince their leader Mullah Mohammad Omar to hand over Osama bin Laden, but the United States showed no interest in the proposal, as it was determined to overthrow the Taliban. As the United States intensified its aerial bombing, aid agencies expressed concern that the situation would prevent them from delivering food aid to the millions of people who were in danger of starving to death as the winter season approached. The United States dropped food packages to people in the same areas where it had just dropped cluster bombs and warned them not to confuse unexploded bombs with food packages, which had a similar color: “Attention, noble Afghan people. As you know, the coalition countries have been air dropping daily humanitarian rations for you. The food ration is enclosed in yellow plastic bags. They come in the shape of rectangular or long squares. The food inside the bags is *halal* and very nutritional. In areas away from where food has been dropped, cluster bombs will also be dropped. The color of these bombs is also yellow.”² The cluster bombs claimed the lives of many innocent people, outraged human rights organizations, and generated anger among the people.

As a result of heavy U.S. bombing on November 13, the Taliban abandoned Kabul without a fight, providing an opportunity for the NA to enter the city, consolidate its position, and seize control of the government. The NA allies, such as the self-proclaimed *Amir* Mohammad Ismail, seized Herat as an estimated six thousand Taliban militiamen dispersed to the countryside; head of *Hizb-e-Wahdat* (Unity Party), Mohammad Karim Khalili, seized Bamiyan as Taliban fighters left the region; and leader of *Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami* (National

Islamic Movement), Abdul Rashid Dostam, secretly met with Taliban leaders and promised them a safe route to Qandahar if they surrendered Arab fighters to him, but the Taliban preferred to surrender to the United States. On November 15 Islamabad airlifted its citizens and some Arab fighters under darkness of night from Qunduz to Pakistan. On November 24 Taliban rule in Qunduz collapsed and some three thousand out of five to seven thousand fighters surrendered; the rest either died, went missing, or were transported to Pakistan.

The captured Taliban fighters were transferred to *Qala-e-Jangi* (War Fort) in Balkh where the United States interrogated them. Two days later, Arabs who managed to carry arms with them inside the fort rebelled, killing their Uzbek guards, as well as a CIA agent Johnny "Mike" Spann. Dostam's forces and the U.S. army crushed the rebellion and seized Taliban and Arab fighters as well as John Walker Lindh, an American who was soon known as the "American Taliban." Dostam lost some one hundred of his men during the operation. Prisoners were transported to Shibarghan in metal containers, and the majority of them died of suffocation because the containers had only a few small air holes made by gunshots. The bodies were buried in a mass grave in the Dasht-e-Laili area. The United States and United Nations (UN) downplayed the massacre, and it is believed that at a later time the evidence was tampered with and remains were removed to avoid the possibility of war crimes prosecutions in the future. Most Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* fighters escaped to the Tora Bora caves, twenty-five miles southwest of Jalalabad, bordering Pakistan. When the United States and its local allies decided to flush them out of the caves, they fled to Pakistan with the assistance of local guides and commanders such as Hazrat Ali, paying \$1,200 per person. The United States rounded up Taliban and suspected individuals, detained them at U.S. bases, tortured them, and sent many to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Others were sent to military facilities in Egypt and Jordan as part of a rendition program, as the United States tried to avoid public scrutiny of its treatment of prisoners of war.

On December 1, 2001, the United States intensified its bombing in Qandahar, inflicting major casualties on the Taliban and causing them to transfer power to former commander Mullah Naqibullah on December 6. Naqibullah was on good terms with the Taliban, but also supported the United States. On December 9 Taliban rule ended in Qandahar as they fled to the countryside, and ten days later U.S. bombing of Taliban bases came to a halt. The intensity of the bombing has been characterized as follows: "Never before in modern times had the United States fought an expeditionary war so remote from its

base structure. The tyranny of distance that dominated the campaign redefined the meaning of endurance in air warfare and represented an unprecedented test of American combat powers. One B-52 sortie lasted 44.3 hours, becoming the longest air combat mission ever flown in history. It was not uncommon for fighter sorties to last 10 hours or more.”³

U.S. policy makers maintained that the Pashtuns constituted the largest ethnic group and that they would not accept the leadership of non-Pashtuns. For this reason they had already identified a “good” loyal Pashtun individual to be installed to power—former Unocal consultant Hamid Karzai, with whom the United States had cultivated a good working relationship in the past. He had been invited to the United States to speak at conferences, detailing the Taliban’s rigid policies. The United States supported Karzai despite the fact that he was low ranking and the least-known political figure in Afghanistan, albeit well-known in Washington. Karzai was chosen for the job because of his long-standing ties with the CIA, since the 1980s.

Karzai comes from a wealthy Pashtun family. His father, Abul Ahad Karzai, was an influential tribal chief in Qandahar and an elected member of the National Assembly in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. His brothers owned restaurants in the United States. In the 1980s Karzai worked as a press and humanitarian aid coordinator for the Peshawar-based *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat* (National Salvation Front) led by Sebghatullah Mojaddadi. After the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime, Karzai served as deputy foreign minister in the new Islamic government. In early 1994 Mohammad Qasim Fahim, then the director of Afghanistan’s Intelligence Department, suspected Karzai of having links with the ISI of Pakistan, arrested him, and brought him in for interrogation. It is said that Fahim personally participated in the interrogation and his men beat Karzai in order to extract information from him. Karzai sustained bruises and escaped the interrogation center when a rocket fired by Hikmatyar’s men landed on the compound, causing panic as the staff ran for cover. Karzai went to Jalalabad and crossed the border to Peshawar and joined his father in Quetta, Pakistan.

When the Taliban movement emerged in Qandahar and gained momentum Karzai supported them, and even contributed financial support of some US\$50,000. He also had a large cache of weapons he had stashed away that he gave to the Taliban when they organized support in Qandahar and consolidated their position there.⁴ Karzai justified his support for the Taliban during an interview with writer Kathy Gannon: “You don’t understand, Kathy. They are Mullahs who

want to stop the killing and stealing and the raping by these *Mujahidin* commanders. They do not want power . . . At one point he was asked by the Taliban to be their representative at the United Nations. Hamid seemed ready to take the posting, but he said that Pakistan had intervened to oppose him.”⁵

Karzai became disenchanted with the Taliban after they murdered his father in July 1999, and he supported the call by ex-king Mohammad Zahir for a peace formula—convening an emergency *Loya Jirga* in Afghanistan to elect the head of a transitional government and hold general elections to decide the future of the country. However, the Taliban dismissed Zahir’s call, stating that those who did not play a role in the anti-Soviet war could not play a role in the country’s affairs.

While the United States was engaged in the fight against the Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* it involved the UN in the political process. A meeting was organized in Bonn, Germany, from November 27 through December 5, 2001, that was attended by representatives of the NA and delegates of the Islamic warriors, who had organized a meeting in Cyprus to discuss strategies for the future of Afghanistan; they became known as the Cyprus Group, backed by Iran. Also attending were the Rome Group, associated with the ex-king Zahir; the Peshawar Group, composed of Pashtun tribal chiefs exiled in Pakistan; and pro-U.S. technocrats from the West. At the meeting they discussed the formula for sharing power in the post-Taliban period. Hazara and Uzbek warlords were not happy, maintaining that they were not adequately represented at the meeting. The nominal head of state, Burhanuddin Rabbani, did not attend the meeting, but insisted that he should remain head of state. He visited Dubai and the United Arab Emirates, and secretly met with Lt. Gen. Ehsan ul-Haq, head of Pakistan’s intelligence agency, the ISI, in an effort to gain Pakistan’s support for his continued leadership. U.S. officials contacted Rabbani and warned him to withdraw his bid for a leadership post. The next day a rocket landed near his residence in Kabul—soon after Rabbani reluctantly endorsed the Bonn meeting.

The meeting was little more than a political façade. Participants had no major say in the process, as the United States imposed Karzai on them as the interim head of state, although the U.S. government would remain in charge of the country’s political and military affairs. Prior to this the United States orchestrated a strategy to promote Karzai as a national hero. Karzai was accompanied by U.S. Special Forces to Qandahar to incite anti-Taliban rebellion there, but with a Taliban threat to his life, he flew to a base in Pakistan. Karzai was

depicted as the guardian and father of the nation and Western fashion industries dubbed him as an elegant and chic leader—such hyperbole even led Karzai to believe that he was such a man. Participants at the meeting signed the accord that became known as the Bonn Agreement, stipulating the structure of a new political system—establishment of an interim administration to run the country for six months until it was succeeded by the Transitional Authority, selected through an emergency *Loya Jirgah*, which would lead the country for eighteen months, and provision of financial aid from the international community to rebuild the country. Karzai did not attend the Bonn meeting, but gave an address via satellite phone. In December he was flown from Qandahar to Kabul, where he was greeted by Fahim, chief of the NA defense forces and former intelligence chief whose men had beaten and interrogated him in the 1990s.

As one of his first acts as head of the interim administration, Karzai formed a cabinet on December 22, 2001. Instead of involving patriots, nationalists, and charismatic leaders with integrity and dedication to the cause of nation building, he stocked the cabinet with former warlords, most well known for committing atrocities against their countrymen, radicals with well-developed capitalist tendencies who abandoned revolutionary politics, and pro-U.S. technocrats, because these forces supported the U.S. war on terrorism and post-Taliban policies of reconstruction under U.S. patronage. Members of the NA remained in control of the major cities and government departments. Fahim was appointed minister of defense, Abdullah was foreign minister, Qanooni was minister of the interior, and Khalili was vice president. Under international pressure, Karzai also appointed two women to the cabinet. Sima Samar, a former member of the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) and a member of the Central Committee of *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, was appointed minister for women's affairs. Sohaila Siddiq, who served as chief surgeon at the four-hundred-bed military hospital in Kabul and was promoted to the rank of major general in the army in 1986 by the Soviet-backed government, became minister of public health. Mohammad Ismail, who was backed by Iran in the early 1990s, became governor of Herat. He ruled the province with an iron hand, refused to confirm individuals that were appointed by Kabul to administrative posts in the province, and appointed religious leaders and staunch conservatives loyal to him to key positions in the local government. He also reopened "an office for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, a Taliban-era fixture."⁶ Dostam became deputy minister for national defense and remained in control of the northern region. The

Pashtun warlord Gul Agha Shirzai became governor of Qandahar (in 2003 he was appointed governor of Nangarhar). Shirzai was deposed by the Taliban, remained in Pakistan, and returned to Qandahar along with some of his fighters accompanied by a few U.S. Special Forces soldiers. He is characterized as “a large man of large appetites, not just for food, but for battle and laughter and power. He speaks in a rough growl, as if his mouth is full, which it often is, but even when it isn’t, his words are slurred, like Marlon Brando in ‘The Godfather.’”⁷ Shirzai supported Karzai during his tenure as governor and remained loyal to him even after he was transferred to another post.

Karzai was weak and needed support and protection from U.S. forces. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established by the UN Security Council on December 20, 2001, in accordance with the Bonn Agreement. It comprised soldiers from twenty-six NATO and fifteen non-NATO countries with the mission of maintaining security in Kabul and supporting the government. Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* leaders remained at large, and the United States offered rewards of US\$10 million and US\$25 million for information leading to their arrest. The fragmented Taliban militias engaged in sporadic fighting against the government and assassinated those who worked for the government. Karzai himself survived one such assassination attempt when he visited Qandahar on September 5, 2002.

An emergency *Loya Jirgah* dominated by warlords was convened June 11–19, 2002, to elect the head of the Transitional Authority to govern the country until the presidential election was held in 2004. There were 1,501 delegates, of which six hundred were selected by the *Loya Jirgah* Commission (some were elected by civic institutions, e.g., teachers from universities, nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], and refugees) and others were elected through a process of local nominations followed by a regional secret ballot. Karzai forced the so-called independent *Loya Jirgah* Commission to approve another fifty people as its members as he wanted to increase his leverage at the *Jirgah*.

There were three potential candidates for the leadership post: ex-king Zahir, Karzai, and Qanooni. Ex-king Zahir believed that people would welcome him. However, upon announcing his candidacy, he did not receive an ovation from the people, who by now regarded him as alien to their lives. Still, on April 18, 2002, he returned home to participate in the *Jirgah* as one of the contenders for the leadership post. Although Zahir had endorsed the U.S. war on the Taliban and *Al-Qaeda*, and his team had appealed to his supporters to refrain from supporting the Taliban and *Al-Qaeda*, he was disappointed to

discover that the United States did not seriously consider him for the leadership post. The United States exploited Zahir's stature for its policies, creating a social base of support and legitimacy for Karzai's leadership despite the fact that Zahir no longer had the full support of the Islamists.

At the *Jirgah*, candidates for leadership posts worked feverishly to gain the support of the delegates. Zahir encountered severe opposition from the NA, who still held a lion's share of influence in the government. They warned him to abandon his campaign for a leadership post, otherwise they would resort to an armed uprising against him and his supporters. The U.S. special envoy intervened in the process and persuaded Zahir to withdraw his candidacy. Zahir was left with no option but to declare that he had no desire to play a prominent role in the country's politics. The *Jirgah* was postponed for a day because a number of delegates were unhappy with U.S. intervention in the process and because warlords were allowed to sit in the front row of the meeting hall. On June 13 the *Jirgah* declared that Karzai won 1,295 votes out of 1,575 ballots cast, and he became the head of the Transitional Authority.⁸ To placate Zahir, in its concluding session on June 19 the *Jirgah* conferred upon him the title *Baba-e-Millat* (Father of the Nation). Zahir accepted, but became a virtual prisoner in the presidential palace, receiving tribal chiefs and international dignitaries, but unable to influence the direction of the political process. He died on July 23, 2007.

On June 19 Karzai formed a new cabinet, retaining some members of the former cabinet associated with the NA. Most cabinet members lacked adequate qualifications, charisma, or public distinction to effectively govern, and the government quickly became ineffective as cabinet members, nominated and backed by warring factions, remained loyal to their respective political parties and staunchly defended their party's positions. To avoid disfranchising the Pashtuns, a deal was made at the *Jirgah* to appoint a Pashtun as minister of the interior. In June 2002 Qanooni, who was minister of the interior, became minister of education, and Taj Mohammad Wardak, a Pashtun bureaucrat, was appointed minister of the interior. Wardak failed to reform the ministry and improve the security situation, so in 2003 Karzai replaced him with Ali Ahmad Jalali, a pro-Western technocrat who worked for Voice of America (VOA). Although Jalali initiated some cosmetic reforms and reshuffled a few department officials, he failed to remove corrupt officials. He resigned in September 2005 and returned to the United States.

Prior to the end of the Transitional Authority's tenure, the government appointed a nine-member committee to prepare a draft of the constitution. The draft was presented to a thirty-five-member Constitutional Commission appointed by Karzai in April 2003 for further deliberation. The Constitutional *Loya Jirgah* (CLJ), dominated by warlords, was convened from December 13, 2003, to January 4, 2004, in Kabul. There were 502 delegates, including one hundred women and fifty-two delegates who were appointed by Karzai. Ex-king Zahir, a number of warlords, and members of the diplomatic corps were invited to attend the inauguration of the CLJ. Soon afterward the delegates cast their ballots for candidates for the post of the *Jirgah's* chairperson. Former president Mojaddadi, who supported Karzai, was elected as the CLJ's chairperson. The draft constitution gave more authority to the president, and Islamists such as Rabbani and Sayyaf objected, demanding that it incorporate Islamic *Sharia* law. Promonarchists wanted a greater role for ex-King Zahir, the warlords argued for a less centralized system of governance in order to be able to exercise their authority in their hometowns, and non-Pashtun ethnic communities favored a federal type of government. Tensions increased among the delegates, and on December 17 a young radical female delegate, Malalay Joya from Farah, criticized Islamic fundamentalists for their role in the destruction of the country and violations of human rights. Islamic warriors threatened her with death, prompting the ISAF to provide her security.

Behind-the-scenes concessions were made to the Islamists. It is suggested that Sayyaf agreed to approve the constitution after he was assured that he would play a pivotal role in appointing judges to the Supreme Court, and the Shias agreed because the constitution recognized Shia jurisprudence. On January 4, 2004, the *Jirgah* approved the amended draft of the constitution, containing 12 chapters and 162 articles, clearing the way for the presidential election on October 9, 2004, and parliamentary election on September 18, 2005. The constitution stated that Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic with a president and two vice presidents, a parliament, and various layers of local governance. The president is elected for a five-year term and cannot be elected to more than two terms. Article 61 stated that the president is elected by receiving more than 50 percent of the votes, and if none of the presidential candidates win a majority of votes then a runoff election will be held between the top two candidates within two weeks after the announcement of the election's outcome. Although Islam was declared the official religion of the country, Article 2 of the constitution allowed followers of other religions to freely practice their

faiths. Article 4 recognized all ethnic communities, acknowledging the mosaic of the country's population and stating that "the nation of Afghanistan comprised Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Pashai, Nooristani, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujar, Brahui, and other ethnic groups." Article 43 stipulated that the state must provide opportunities to teach native languages in regions where a significant percentage of the population speaks these languages. Although Article 22 recognized gender equality, warlords in the power structure continued their misogynistic practices as before, violating the constitution. Article 158 enshrined the title *Baba-e-Millat*, conferred upon ex-king Zahir by the emergency *Loya Jirgah*, to be used by him during his lifetime.

Prior to holding the presidential election, a committee prepared the electoral law. It stipulated that candidates must not receive funding from foreign sources or illegal domestic sources; must not have nonofficial military forces; and shall not entice ethnolinguistic, sectarian, and regional differences or resort to the use of force for any purpose. To monitor and supervise the process of presidential and parliamentary elections, a Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) that included international and local staff was formed. People welcomed the presidential election and, despite fears of attack by the Taliban, went to the polling stations to cast their votes. People regarded the election as an end to years of despotic rule by the Islamic warriors and an opportunity to vote for candidates of their own choice—something that they never dreamed would happen in their lifetimes.

Relations between Karzai and the Panjshiri faction of the NA had soured since Fahim resisted reforms in the ministry of defense, which was dominated by the Panjshiris. Karzai's decision to use Americans for his personal security detail further aggravated relations with Fahim; whenever he visited the palace the Americans searched his vehicle. In July 2004 Karzai removed Fahim from the cabinet, saying the move was based on his policy of opposition to warlords—a policy intended to gain public support in the upcoming presidential election.

Warlords associated with the Panjshiri faction of the NA had already suffered a crisis that contributed to the decline of their status in the country's politics. Ahmad Shah Masoud personally controlled and managed the financial affairs of the resistance, which took in large sums of money from foreign donations. He also controlled emerald and lapis lazuli mines in areas under the control of the NA. One of his relatives traded the precious stones on the foreign market, generating up to US\$60 million in a good year. These millions, which had been stored in secret bank accounts in Dubai and other Arab

states became a matter of dispute when Fahim reportedly took control of the mines. Masoud's surviving family members controlled some of these funds; Fahim and Engineer Arif, his intelligence chief, also controlled a portion. Arif demanded that Masoud's family hand over their monetary holdings because Fahim was now their leader. Former president Rabbani also entered the fray and demanded a share. These disputes exacerbated an already volatile relationship.⁹ In 2003 a new group, *Nahzat-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National Movement of Afghanistan; hereafter referred to as the *Nahzat* Party) was formed by Ahmad Wali Masoud. Initially it was supported by the Panjshiri trio—Qanooni, Abdullah, and Fahim—however, the party suffered another crisis in 2004 when Qanooni contested the presidential election as a candidate of the *Nahzat* party. After the election Qanooni split from the *Nahzat* and formed a new party, *Hizb-e-Afghanistan-e-Nawin* (Neo-Afghanistan Party).

Islamic warriors contested the presidential election. They were aware of the fact that they would not have public support if they ran as candidates of their parties, and electoral laws barred party members from participation in the election, so they declared themselves as independent candidates. For example, Dostam, head of *Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami*, Mohammad Mohaqiq of *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, Abdul Hafiz Mansoor of *Jamiat-e-Islami*, pro-Soviet members of the *Parcham* and *Khalq* factions of the defunct *Hizb-e-Watan*, and others declared themselves to be independent candidates. A few months before the election the candidates traveled to various regions, met with people, explained their policies, and solicited their support. These warlords who had repeatedly violated human rights during the zenith of their power now reinvented themselves as humble public servants, pledging to promote democracy and human rights and enforce the rule of law.

Dostam, the thuggish Afghan warlord, would not seem a likely student of Abraham Lincoln. But there he was echoing the Gettysburg Address as he spoke recently to a large political gathering in northern Afghanistan. His speech was a booming appeal for a future that offered Afghans "government by the people, for the people" . . . The lofty language, the dapper attire, even expressions of regret for making "mistakes"—all are part of an effort by Dostam, a onetime soldier of fortune whose name is a byword for a decade of warlord power to resell himself to his compatriots and the world as a democratic politician and servant of the people in kinder, gentler Afghanistan . . . Dostam rose to power as a ruthless brawler, the Mike Tyson of Afghan politics . . . Dostam and his Soviet-funded army of tough Uzbek and Turkmen irregulars emerged as the only real mobile outfit the communist regime of President Najibullah

could count on. "In 1989 he had a budget for 45,000 troops, but we know he had only 25,000 on his payroll," says a former Soviet diplomat. "When our advisers confronted him over it, he'd laugh and say, 'don't worry, I'll get hold of the other 20,000 if they're needed.'" The Soviets kept paying.¹⁰

Secular and liberal-minded candidates emphasized the need for transitional justice, economic development, support for modern education, the rule of law, and government accountability to the public. To counter the influence of secular candidates and their political and social platforms, candidates of the Islamic parties emphasized their role during the national liberation struggle against the Soviet occupation army, condemned Karzai's government for marginalizing the role of Islamic warriors in the country's politics, and made emotional appeals to the people to vote for them so that they could reassert the role of Islamic warriors in the government. This theme was echoed when Qanooni addressed a large gathering in Baghlan, criticizing Karzai for betraying the cause of *jihad* and expressing regret for supporting him since he was installed in power in December 2001. He stated "that for years he had been on the front line and that he had supported Karzai for the last three years because he thought the *Mujahidin* would be respected . . . The victorious *Mujahidin* who fought for 23 years are called warlords. It is not good for the nation to ignore the *jihad*. 'You should elect a president who knows and feels your poverty, who has grown up among you. Don't vote for those who come from abroad. It is up to you to choose between a Muslim or a non-Muslim.'" ¹¹

As a candidate Karzai took steps to marginalize Qanooni and reduce his power base among the Tajiks by selecting Ahmad Zia Masoud to be his running mate for the first vice president position. When Qanooni used Ahmad Shah Masoud's photographs in his campaign, Masoud's other brother, Ahmad Wali Masoud, objected to such a propaganda strategy, stating that no candidate is allowed to place his posters next to Masoud's image and exploit Masoud for political gain. The Hazara warlord Mohaqiq, who served as minister of planning, resigned his post in 2004, left *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, formed a separate party, *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan), and declared his candidacy for the presidential election as an independent candidate. Karzai selected Khalili, head of *Hizb-e-Wahdat*, to be his running mate as the second vice president—a calculated strategy to undermine the Hazara's unity. However, Hazaras largely voted for Mohaqiq, as he championed the cause of Hazara nationalism. Mohaqiq knew that he had no chance

to win the election, but participated to prove that he still commanded support among the Hazaras, in the hope that the government would recognize his status. Like other presidential candidates, Mohaqiq also repackaged himself as an everyman working to represent the people and fighting for a government that would serve their interests.

People were disenchanted with warlords. They preferred Karzai and voted for him, as they believed that he had the backing of the United States and the international community working to rebuild the country. People also hoped that Karzai would bring to justice those who committed crimes and atrocities, as he promised during the campaign. Although the government maintained effective security during the presidential election, the Taliban killed twelve and injured thirty-three election workers and staff. There were some irregularities in the voting process, but election officials declared Karzai the winner (see Table 6.1). Karzai was inaugurated as the first elected head of state on December 7, 2004. Eleven presidential contenders each

Table 6.1 Results of presidential election, October 9, 2004

Candidate	Affiliation	No. of votes	Percentage
Hamid Karzai	Independent	4,443,029	55.4
Mohammad Yunus Qanooni	<i>Nahzat-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan</i>	1,306,503	16.3
Mohammad Mohaqiq	Independent	935,325	11.7
Abdul Rashid Dostam	Independent	804,861	10.0
Abdul Latif Padram	<i>Kangara-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan</i>	110,160	1.4
Masooda Jalal	Independent female candidate	91,451	1.1
Sayed Ishaq Gilani	<i>Nahzat-e-Hambastagi-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan</i>	80,081	1.0
11 candidates	Independent	253,162	3.1

Valid votes: 8,024,536; invalid votes: 104,404; total votes: 8,128,940.

Source: The Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), Decision Number 2004-102, November 3, 2004; available at <http://www.results.jemb.org/home.asp> (accessed December 23, 2005).

secured less than 1 percent of the votes cast. They knew that they could not win the race and participated in the election with the intention of gaining name recognition, hoping that the new administration would consider appointing them to posts in the government.¹²

Islamists, having failed to win the presidential election, targeted their resources and efforts at winning a majority of seats in the National Assembly, with the objective of using that institution to reassert their role in the country's politics. They feared that a National Assembly dominated by the opposition would undermine them and pass legislation to try them in a court of law for human rights violations. The National Assembly consists of two chambers, the House of Representatives and the House of Elders, or Senate. The constitution recognizes the National Assembly "as that highest legislative organ that is the manifestation of the will of its people and represents the whole nation." The House of Representatives comprised 249 members elected for a five-year term. Elections for the National Assembly and *Shura-e-Wilayati* (provincial councils) were held on September 18, 2005, on the basis of a single and nontransferable voting system. The electoral law allocated 27 percent, or 68 seats out of 249, for female candidates and 10 seats for the *Kochi* (Pashtun nomads), 3 of which were reserved exclusively for *Kochi* female candidates.

Prior to the parliamentary election, candidates visited their respective constituencies, promised they would work to uphold the rule of law, defend *Sharia* law, and use their position, if elected, to build roads, hospitals, schools, and promote public good. There was a low turnout on the day of the election; just half of the twelve million registered voters went to the polling stations to cast their vote. People had become disillusioned after the presidential election because Karzai, who ran on a promise of bringing to justice those who had violated human rights, did not take substantial action against these people and even allowed them to participate in parliamentary and provincial council elections as independent candidates or under other political labels. The Electoral Complaints Commission dismissed many complaints against candidates who violated human rights and allowed them to stand for election. Although the electoral law excluded political parties from the election, party candidates ran without putting a party name on their registration form. In 2008 there were 101 secular and religious parties registered with the Ministry of Justice. The government does not consult political parties on decisions it makes with regard to social, cultural, political, and other development issues.

Islamists objected to women's participation in the parliamentary and provincial council elections because this went against the Islamic code of

conduct, and they harassed and intimidated female candidates. Because of this, many female candidates kept male relatives on their campaign staffs. Death threats caused a significant number of female candidates to withdraw from the race. Although security was tight prior to and during the elections, violence did occur. On election day, seven progovernment clerics, seven candidates, and five election workers were murdered by unidentified gunmen trying to discourage people from voting. Female candidates that participated in the elections despite the death threats defeated their male rivals in several regions, as people voted for them even if they knew that the women might not be able to effectively represent them. Warlords, candidates of the defunct pro-Soviet groups *Khalq* and *Parcham*, and those of the Taliban and *Hizb-e-Islami* were elected largely through vote buying: disbursing cash to poor voters and making false promises to those who were disenchanted with the system. In some instance they resorted to fear tactics and intimidated people into supporting their candidacy. The election was monitored by a team of international observers—the European Union Election Observation Mission to Afghanistan (EUEOM)—with sixty field observers in the provinces. Although the team acknowledged irregularities and fraud in the election in a number of provinces, it still endorsed the overall election results (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Results of parliamentary election, September 18, 2005

Province	No. of seats	Seats won		Total registered voters	Turnout (%)
		Male	Female		
Badakhshan	9	7	2	400,918	60.8
Badghis	4	3	1	234,680	58
Baghlan	8	6	2	386,713	54
Balkh	11	8	3	600,893	51
Bamiyan	4	3	1	176,008	72
Daikundi	4	3	1	253,589	62
Farah	5	4	1	192,614	58
Faryab	9	6	3	410,716	63
Ghazni	11	8	3	745,225	51
Ghor	6	4	2	320,374	67

Table 6.2 Results of parliamentary election, September 18, 2005 (*cont.*)

Province	No. of seats	Seats won		Total registered voters	Turnout (%)
		Male	Female		
Herat	17	13	5	824,722	63
Helmand	8	6	2	528,124	37
Jawzjan	5	4	1	218,548	63
Kabul	33	24	9	1,193,400	33.4
Kapisa	4	3	1	202,800	41.4
Khost	5	4	1	336,125	56
Kunar	4	3	1	274,583	46
Laghman	4	3	1	230,948	38
Logar	4	3	1	197,380	39
Nangarhar	14	10	4	804,515	47
Nimrooz	2	1	1	85,562	44.1
Nooristan	2	1	1	124,583	64.1
Orazgan	3	2	1	150,865	23.4
Paktika	4	3	1	500,719	53
Paktiya	5	4	1	394,504	64
Panjshir	2	1	1	139,397	53.3
Parwan	6	4	2	245,385	21
Qandahar	11	8	3	744,952	25.3
Qunduz	9	7	2	402,195	61.3
Samangan	4	3	1	165,218	67
Sar-e-Pol	5	4	1	192,294	63
Takhar	9	7	2	418,696	67
Wardak	5	3	2	243,219	41.3
Zabul	3	2	1	102,695	20.1
<i>Kochis</i> (nomads)	10	7	3	534,105	38.3

The total number of registered voters reached 12.5 million and the total voter turnout was 51.5 percent.

Source: JEMB (2005), available at <http://www.results.jemb.org/home.asp> (accessed June 28, 2006).

The National Assembly was officially inaugurated on December 19, 2005, and was attended by U.S. Vice President Richard Cheney. Soon after the opening of the National Assembly, members of the House of Representatives cast their votes to elect a speaker for the legislative period of five years, and for two deputies, a secretary, and an assistance secretary for a year. It is suggested that Karzai favored former president Rabbani to be the speaker, but when Rabbani supported Qanooni, a Tajik from Panjshir, as a candidate, Karzai threw his support behind Sayyaf, a Pashtun from Paghman, Kabul, and head of *Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (later renamed *Tanzim-e-Dawat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*). Mohaqiq also supported Sayyaf, whom Hazaras condemned for the ruthless war he and his allies Rabbani and Masoud waged on them in the early 1990s; this action further eroded his image and credibility among Hazaras. A significant number of Hazara intellectuals and social and political activists were disillusioned with Mohaqiq, Khalili, and Akbari. Others withdrew their support and formed a new party, *Nabzat-e-Madani-e-Afghanistan* (Civil Movement of Afghanistan), officially declaring its formation in 2008. Mohaqiq was severely criticized not only by Hazara delegations at the National Assembly but also by Hazaras in general for supporting Sayyaf. Mohaqiq justified his support for Sayyaf: "When we support Sayyaf we give this message to the Islamic world, that we have an Islamic scholar as head, and there are no fears for Islam [in Afghanistan]. Also there is a message for the Taliban: we have a Pashtun as the head, we have an Islamic scholar as the head, why do you accept Pakistani orders?"¹³

Qanooni won the majority of votes cast and became speaker of the House of Representatives. A number of representatives were not happy with the domination of Islamists in the house. During the election of the speaker, out of 249 representatives, 4 did not cast their votes and 5 abstained from voting; others supported candidates who wore western dress and shorter beards as a symbol of less rigidity than those with longer beards.¹⁴ The cost for both the presidential and parliamentary elections is estimated to be US\$300 million.

Islamists enjoy a numerical majority in the House of Representatives and they oppose liberal, nationalist, and progressive representatives. Staunch conservatives do not tolerate or accept female representatives on an equal footing, and their misogynistic views often come to the fore when female deputies express themselves in any way. On May 7, 2006, Malalay Joya criticized representatives of *Jihadi* backgrounds, condemning them for atrocities they committed against the people during the civil war in the 1990s. Joya's harsh criticism enraged not

only her male counterparts but also a number of her female counterparts (Parwin Durani, Safora Niazi, and Malalai Eshaqzai) who were associated with the Islamic warriors. Some of these representatives pelted her with plastic water bottles, provoking a scuffle between her supporters and opponents when they confronted each other in the hall. A cameraman for the privately owned Tolo Television station, which was recording the house's session, was physically assaulted. In 2007 Joya again lashed out at representatives of *Jihadi* backgrounds and compared the house to a stable. This harsh criticism provoked conservatives and Islamists to take punitive action against her, expelling her from the house and barring her from attending its future sessions. Joya's supporters organized rallies in her support in many regions and demanded her reinstatement. Similarly the international community requested the House of Representatives reconsider its decision and allow her to attend its sessions, but the *Jihadi*-dominated house refused to do so.¹⁵

The House of Elders, or Senate, consists of 102 members, with one-third of it elected from within each provincial council, one-third from the district councils, and one-third appointed by the head of state. Individuals appointed to the senate included former defense minister Fahim, Mullah Shir Mohammad Akhundzada, Abdul Saboor Farid of *Hizb-e-Islami*, and Mawlawi Arsala Rahmani, who served as the Taliban's deputy minister; Karzai appointed a few women to the senate as well. The senate also elected its speaker and other administrative staff. Former president Mojaddadi, an appointee of Karzai, received 50 of 102 votes on December 20, 2005, and defied democratic procedures and became speaker of the senate when he forced his rival to step aside without a runoff election.

One of the distinguishing and unfortunate aspects of the country's National Assembly is that most of its members are semiliterate and lack a basic awareness and understanding of community development concepts. They also lack political experience and knowledge of legal issues, making it difficult for them to understand and interpret issues brought before them. In many instances, instead of taking part in discourse, some of them have been observed taking naps while the National Assembly is debating issues.

Soon after the parliamentary election Karzai introduced his cabinet and members of the Supreme Court to the House of Representatives for confirmation. In the past, Tajiks of the Panjshiri faction of the NA were dominant in the country's politics and represented Afghanistan in the international arena. Karzai now decided to marginalize them and did not reappoint Abdullah as minister for foreign

affairs. The United States and each NATO country have a man in the cabinet who are citizens of the countries in the West. Prior to and during the confirmation process by the House of Representatives, these individuals stated that they would give up their foreign citizenship, but after confirmation their status remained unchanged. They remained loyal to their adopted countries and worked to inject Western cultural values and political influence in Afghanistan. A number of Afghan individuals who settled in Europe and North America in the 1980s and afterward also returned home with the hope of being appointed to positions of authority in the private and public sectors. Most of them lacked adequate qualifications but were appointed to positions in the government because of their influential contacts. For example, Izzatullah Wasifi, son of Azizullah Wasifi, former minister of agriculture, was arrested in the United States on drug charges in July 1987 and spent nearly four years in jail in Nevada. nevertheless, Karzai appointed him as director general of the General Independent Administration of Anti-Corruption and Bribery.

Karzai, who swore to honor and defend the constitution, introduced the eighty-year-old and relatively uneducated Fazl Hadi Shinwari to the House of Representatives for confirmation as chief justice of the Supreme Court. Shinwari, a conservative cleric of *Jihadi* background, graduated from the religious school *Dar al-Oloom-e-Kabul* and had served as chief justice of the Supreme Court since December 2001; however, the assembly did not endorse him for the post. The appointment of cabinet members, Supreme Court judges, and other senior government posts was largely based on cronyism and behind-the-scenes political compromises to appease the Islamic warriors as well as ethnic and tribal communities.

Warlords used parliamentary prerogatives to shield themselves from prosecution and passed a twelve-point resolution on January 31, 2007, that granted immunity to all those who violated human rights during the two decades of civil war. They called their supporters to a rally in Kabul's main stadium where notorious Taliban henchmen used to execute individuals who did not follow their draconian rules. The warlords attended the rally and their supporters carried placards inscribed with epithets such as "Death to America" and "Long Live Islam and Islamic Warriors." The resolution was sent to the senate, which endorsed it on February 20, and it was then submitted to Karzai for approval. Under pressure from those who expected him to follow through on his promise to bring war criminals to justice, Karzai inserted a clause into the bill that recognized the rights of victims to seek justice and bring charges against those accused of

committing crimes against humanity. After inserting the changes, Karzai returned it to the House of Representatives and it was voted into law on March 10, 2007. A number of senate members had also committed atrocities, but nonetheless, the senate endorsed the bill on May 6. While the bill ostensibly exposed criminals and human rights violators to prosecution, it did not really have any teeth, given the state of the country's justice system, where corruption remained rampant and it was difficult for victims to substantiate their cases against those accused. Karzai's endorsement of the empty legislation further eroded his base of support, as he did not substantially abide by the promise he made during the presidential election not to grant blanket immunity to war criminals.

Endorsement of the bill caused moderates, liberals, and social activists, including some high-ranking clerics, to condemn it. On March 7, 2007, the country's highest body of clerics ruled against the initiative on the grounds that such an initiative goes against *Sharia* law, which stipulates that only a victim's family may choose whether to bring charges against, or forgive, a criminal for crimes against a victim. They argued that the National Assembly cannot violate *Sharia* law by assuming the right to press charges. A number of moderate and progressive representatives in the National Assembly also expressed opposition to the bill and boycotted the session when the vote was taken. The UN, Human Rights Watch, and civic organizations expressed strong opposition to the bill, regarding it as counter to the basic principles of human rights. The bill, "The National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and National Stability Law" was published in the country's official gazette in December 2009, making it law. The government continued paying the warlords in order to gain their loyalty and cooperation, and turned a blind eye even as they continued to commit crimes and accumulate wealth by robbing the public coffers. One journalist described the situation: "Dostam strides across the marble-inlay floors of his new mansion—a pink, three-tiered wedding cake of a house. The foyer boasts a massive aquarium stocked with exotic fish, next to a life-size portrait of Dostam standing beside U.S. General Tommy Franks . . . The money to build the house, Dostam says, came from Afghan President Hamid Karzai . . . According to Dostam, Karzai pays him \$80,000 a month to serve as his emissary to the northern provinces. 'I asked for a year up front in cash so that I could build my dream house,' he says."¹⁶

When differences between Karzai and Dostam flared again after Dostam beat a political rival, Karzai decided to arrest him. A standoff between Dostam's armed men and the police came to an end when

Dostam's ally Turkey, a member of NATO and one of the major donor nations in rebuilding Afghanistan, intervened and a deal was made that allowed Dostam to go to Turkey.

POLITICS OF RECONSTRUCTION

After the collapse of the Taliban's rule, reconstruction required the rebuilding of the nation's security forces—the national army and police forces—to ensure that international funding was not squandered and diverted by private armies. The U.S. Department of Defense created the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), tasked with improving the security situation and engaging in community development projects. The ISAF was mandated to support the government and maintain security in Kabul, and the UN Security Council, by its resolution 1510 in 2003, expanded its mandate to major regional centers. A major task involved the building of a national army, which in 2002 had more than 58,000 men. In September 2008 the Ministry of Defense proposed to increase the number to 122,000 men. Another task involved building the national police, and in May 2007 its size increased from 62,000 to 82,000 men. A Police Auxiliary Force was created, numbering 10,895 in 2007. The United States took the lead in the creation of the national army. Germany engaged in training the police forces, and set up a police academy in Kabul, although it neglected training policemen in the provinces. Italy provided funds and expertise to reform the justice sector. In 2003 the United States took over the training of the police force and subcontracted the work to U.S.-based DynCorp International, which spent \$24 million establishing seven training centers throughout the country with a three-week intensive training course to fight the insurgency.

A new initiative, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), was launched to disarm private armies and teach them new skills to enable them to support themselves and integrate themselves into civil society. Although the program succeeded in disarming a number of warlords, private militias and armed groups continued to operate throughout the country. A number of warlords covertly maintained their militias, disguising them as members of political parties, business groups, and even private security firms. In Badakhshan Province's capital city Faizabad, powerful mayor Nazir Mohammad reacted violently and with impunity whenever his proffered services were declined by foreign organizations. For example, a German-run regional military assistance base was firebombed after its officials dismissed his security services. The attack was attributed to Taliban

militants, despite the lack of any evidence that they were in the area.¹⁷ Individuals possessing arms preferred to sell their arms to prospective private buyers, as the government did not provide adequate compensation to them for surrendering their arms. The government remains weak and ineffective. Warlords are the *de facto* rulers in the countryside, and the highly centralized system of governance that was created has degenerated into a more decentralized system.

Two decades of armed conflict destroyed the country's economy, with no stable national currency until after the Taliban was overthrown. The UN human development index ranked Afghanistan near the bottom on the list: 169 out of 174 nations. About 60 to 80 percent of the population survived on the equivalent of a dollar a day. At the Tokyo Conference, held January 21–22, 2002, the international community pledged a total of US\$4.5 billion in aid for the rebuilding of the country over a five-year period, but aid money for the reconstruction was misused. The donor nations gathered in London on February 26, 2006, for a conference on the future of Afghanistan's reconstruction, signing the *Afghanistan Compact*, pledging US\$10.5 billion in aid, with the United States being the largest donor at US\$1.1 billion, followed by Britain at US\$800 million. Karzai asked for US\$4 billion per year for another five-year period.

Financial aid for reconstruction since 2001 has not produced tangible results that have improved the lives of the poor, and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen every year. Even in Kabul, the city's streets in the most affluent neighborhoods, such as Wazir Akbar Khan, where warlords, diplomats, international aid agencies, senior state officials, and tycoons live, are pockmarked with potholes. The bulk of the international aid money for rebuilding and revenues from drugs and narcotics trafficking support the lifestyles of the country's emerging rich, who have no social distinction or sense of social obligation and lack a social base of support, so they continue to serve their own needs to the exclusion of anything else. Religious leaders, who were supposed to pioneer community development and use Islamic charity funds to improve the lives of the people, have misused the funds to advance their own personal agendas and business transactions, and have become rich in the process. They have no interest in participating in the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure and have worked to further consolidate their own power bases by establishing grand *madrasas* and television networks to propagate their views and inculcate younger generations with their vision of Islamic ethos and values.

The politics of rebuilding can be characterized as efforts by a group of people within and outside the government working to financially prosper quickly, disregarding the abject poverty of the people. Corruption exists at every level of the state apparatus, although every official claims to promote the public good. Seizure of public land is a common practice, evidenced by the destruction of the historic Shirkor military garrison in Kabul and a number of houses of poor families adjacent to the garrison in September 2003 and distribution of the land by the municipality among more than 288 people, including cabinet members. In 2003 a government-formed committee composed of representatives from the president's office, municipality, the ministries of justice and defense, and the Human Rights Commission fixed the price at \$11,200 per *biswa* (one hundred square meters), however, 243 of these people did not pay the money.¹⁸

People with links to drug cartels and those engaged in narcotics trafficking have become richer, and the measure of their wealth is seen in the building of numerous opulent houses, markets, wedding halls, and cake houses in major cities, referred to by the people as *sakhtamanha-e-poodari* (narcotecture). Corruption is the norm, and the laws are regularly broken by people who make the laws and those charged with enforcing them, which contributes to the perpetuation of the culture of corruption. People pay bribes to buy justice and security; even students bribe teachers to get good grades and pass annual school examinations. Banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and petty theft are common practices, and officers are part of the problem, as citizens do not regard them as a true law enforcement body protecting civilians, but rather as another element that threatens their security. Police officers in charge of the roads extort bribes for passage in the daytime, and at night they change out of their uniforms and rob passengers and trucks carrying goods and merchandise.

International assistance to train and organize the country's security forces did not produce the intended results, as the people in charge of the program misused the funding. Government officials inflated the number of staff on the payroll in order to pocket the salaries of "ghost" officers, and in some regions of the country the number of "ghost" officers is suggested to be 60 to 80 percent of the staff on the payroll. Appointments of chiefs of security in strategic locations, such as bordering regions where drugs and narcotics are smuggled out of the country, are reserved for high bidders who pay US\$150,000 to US\$200,000. When the international community, particularly the donor nations, complained about the corrupt officials and requested their removal, Karzai simply transferred them to other high-profile

posts. People believe that Karzai is part of the narco-mafia and his brother Ahmad Wali, a member of the Qandahar Provincial Council, has been accused of involvement in heroin trafficking and using his high position—he is beyond the reach of any government institutions—to provide safe routes for drugs to be transported to Iran and then to the West.

Individuals with integrity, skills, and commitment to the public good are not appointed to positions of authority, and some even refuse to be part of Karzai's administration as a matter of principle. Thomas Schweich, a senior American official in charge of the antinarcotics effort at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, expressed dissatisfaction with Karzai, stating that he knowingly and intentionally obstructed the antinarcotics struggle, shielded the cultivation of poppies from eradication efforts by the U.S. antinarcotics team, and protected corrupt senior officials. Karzai opposed aerial eradication of the poppy fields, arguing that farmers may think of the program as some type of poison dropped from the sky by the government and that it might erode his tenuous authority.¹⁹ Senior government officials also opposed aerial spraying of poppy fields, ostensibly on the grounds that chemical spraying could cause side effects to public health and might harm peoples' livestock. Some of these officials, who are associated with the Islamic warriors, had no regard for public safety in the 1990s as their forces brutalized civilians, but by protecting their vested interests, these officials have now become self-appointed advocates of public welfare.

On July 28, 2008, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), Christina Oguz, stated that corruption in the government is preventing efforts to fight the booming opium trade, as officials in charge of security and prisons release "people who have committed crimes of corruption or who are the brains and profiteers behind trafficking networks . . . they are people with power and people with powerful friends who can use their mobile phones to release a suspect from detention without a fair trial."²⁰ Intelligence information indicates that senior government officials "were deeply involved in the narcotics trade. Narco-traffickers were buying off hundreds of police chiefs, judges, and other officials. Narco-corruption went to the top of the Afghan government."²¹ Although poor farmers cultivate opium for cash and use the dross seeds to feed their animals, it is the wealthy farmers who are part of the drug mafia and are the driving force in cultivating poppies. The United States "released photos of industrial size poppy farms—many owned by pro-government opportunists, others owned by Taliban sympathizers. Most of these narco-farms were near

major southern cities. Farmers were digging wells, surveying new land for poppy cultivation, diverting U.S.-built irrigation canals to poppy fields and starting expensive reclamation projects.”²² Whenever government officials come under international pressure they destroy a few poppy farms to demonstrate that they are committed to antinarcotics efforts. In fact, the government eradication squads target the farms of poor peasants and their political opponents but do not touch the farms of political allies or rich individuals who are well connected to the power structure. As international pressure on Karzai mounted to take action or lose credibility:

Karzai ousted Asadullah Wafa from his job as governor of Helmand province amid allegations that he had profited from that province’s enormous opium exports and enabled large-scale organized crime. Wafa had expelled two British officials from the province after they had launched a program to get Taliban leaders to surrender. After being fired, Wafa was promptly appointed . . . to a new position: head of the complaints department in the national security branch of Karzai’s office. Indeed the current pressure by Canadian and other officials to remove the Qandahar governor [Asadullah Khalid] from office seems almost identical to a similar campaign, begun five years ago, to get his predecessor, the former *Mujahidin* fighter Gul Agha Shirzai, removed from the same office. Shirzai had admitted to receiving \$1 million a week from his share of import duties and from the opium trade, and was considered violent and dangerous.²³

Most farmers who destroyed their poppy fields did not receive the financial compensation they had been promised. This failure of the government to deliver on its promises drove these people away from the government and made them vulnerable to exploitation by drug lords and narco-mafias. An average person in Afghanistan earns about US\$200 a year, which forces many to engage in dealing drugs as a way to survive. Drug lords with links to senior government officials force the poor to smuggle and trade opium, and they are merciless to the people indebted to them. For instance, in the Pamir region of Badakhshan, poor and indebted farmers in desperate need of money to make ends meet have no option but to mortgage their lands and even offer their children, particularly daughters, to their creditors, primarily drug lords. The cruelty of the mafias toward the poor is such that they have been observed using pliers to pull out the teeth of men for failing to pay their debts. The failure of the antinarcotics struggle transformed the country such that the country produced about 90 percent of the world’s heroin in 2006 and 2007.

International aid allocated for promoting peace with the opposition also yielded no return, as officials in charge misused the funds for their own gains. Instead of paying money to the armed opposition to join the government, officials in charge instead paid noncombatants to buy their loyalty. In 2008 the British expressed displeasure with the Afghanistan Commission on Strengthening Peace, led by the speaker of the senate, Mojaddadi, stating that the British contributed £2 million, or about US\$4 million, in 2007 to be distributed to opposition forces as an incentive for them to lay down their arms and join the peace process, but that money has been paid to those who are not part of the armed opposition group.²⁴

The Neocolonial Power: Nongovernmental Organizations

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved in humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan since the Soviet occupation in 1979 and the subsequent war that forced an estimated five million to leave the country and seek shelter in Pakistan and Iran. Prior to the Soviet invasion there were a handful of NGOs that worked with the government in Afghanistan, but their numbers increased after the Soviet invasion to about 46 international and 206 national NGOs by 1999. The international NGOs received 65 percent of the aid, while the national NGOs received 28 percent and NGOs run by Islamic organizations received 7 percent of the aid provided by Western countries.²⁵ During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan the NGOs primarily focused on initiating and supporting projects in the southern regions bordering Pakistan, but after the Soviet troop withdrawal, a number of international NGOs and the UN established offices inside the country and provided assistance to the northern and western regions that were neglected during and after the Soviet occupation. However, the central region of the country, Hazarajat, received very little financial support from the international NGOs. As the civil war escalated, a number of international NGOs closed their offices in Kabul and moved their operations to Pakistan. Their activities in Afghanistan were further restricted after the Taliban seized power.

In the post-Taliban period, international assistance intended for reconstruction was mainly channeled through the international NGOs because these organizations were viewed as experienced in the field of reconstruction and disciplined in financial matters. Major donors included the United States, through the Agency for International Development (USAID), Britain, Germany, and Japan. Their

embassies functioned as clearinghouses for funding to international NGOs, bypassing the government of Afghanistan. The embassies worked closely with international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose policies are focused on promoting a free market economy. In order to project an image as grass-roots organizations with a purely local and humanitarian focus, NGOs promoted themselves as independent institutions, included a few local hires in token positions, and downplayed their dependence on funding from the donor countries. International NGOs subcontracted projects to national NGOs, which in turn subcontracted to private companies. Also downplayed was the fact that most of these national NGOs and private companies were owned by warlords or high-level government officials. The increasing popularity and profitability of NGOs led most construction companies to adopt names that gave an outward impression of a local institution engaged in humanitarian works. This tactic had the added benefit of allowing the company exemptions from government taxes and from customs and duties on their imported goods. As the situation gained notice, the Ministry of Planning reacted by drafting a policy paper of regulations for NGO activity meant to ensure transparency and accountability, but these toothless measures were largely ignored.

This incestuous process of contracting and subcontracting contributed to the siphoning of international aid away from critical infrastructure projects. Projects were funded that had no positive impact on the living conditions of the people. Often large sums were simply pocketed by expatriates working for NGOs who claimed to be highly educated and experienced community organizers and developers. A typical expatriate receives an average monthly salary of US\$4,000, mostly tax free, while a local expert with a similar background, education, and experience is paid a fraction of that amount. One expatriate justified his higher salary saying that “even if it were true that the ex-pat NGO workers earn an average of US\$4,000 a month, that still only comes to an annual salary of US\$48,000—hardly an extremely inflated salary especially if you consider the fact that we have to live under pretty harsh conditions.”²⁶ NGOs have generally failed to build local capabilities, and continue to use their own people rather than locals to fill most positions. This practice alienates the community they ostensibly serve because many of these implanted outsiders have little or no local cultural awareness and little incentive to develop any. In addition, this prevents any movement toward community self-sufficiency, as the local population is effectively shut out of most employment opportunities. NGO officials are loathe to lose their privileged

status and lucrative income by transferring skills to the local population. The offspring of expatriates with degrees from Western colleges and universities who cannot find employment in the United States or Europe increasingly show up on the payrolls of NGOs, where they can create a resume of nation-building experience and then leverage this newly forged background into a job elsewhere. The communities themselves are largely shortchanged by a process that shuttles transient newcomers into development positions that require the wisdom of experience to provide a real local benefit.

Expatriates employed by NGOs enjoy an upscale, even opulent, lifestyle compared to their local neighbors. Their residences are patrolled by security staff and furnished with imports. They have personal chefs to prepare meals and household staff to handle cleaning, laundry, and errands. Their vehicles of choice are the latest model sports utility vehicles (SUVs), such as Nissan Pathfinders and Toyota Land Cruisers, equipped with air conditioning and satellite communications equipment. These vehicles have gained prominence and are viewed as symbols of status and authority. One expatriate justified the trappings of his luxurious lifestyle: "NGOs do not travel around in Toyota Land Cruisers that cost US\$75,000. We travel around in Nissan Patrols that cost US\$33,000. Expensive, yes, but it is the local Afghan warlords whose car of choice is the Land Cruiser . . . we live life to the full because . . . one of us could be dead the next day simply because we work for an NGO."²⁷ The costs of these perks and comforts consume about 80 percent of the funds intended for development. The estimated average cost for maintaining the UN staff in Kabul for a year is US\$250,000 to US\$300,000, with an additional US\$8,000 to US\$15,000 per month in rent for offices and accommodations. In order to keep the funding coming, something eventually must be built, and that is generally where cost-cutting takes place. Development in some impoverished areas is in name only. Signboards on the roadsides prominently display the names of projects for schools, basic health centers, bridges, and so on built by a particular NGO. A few years later the same project is already crumbling because of cheap, low-quality materials and shoddy piecemeal construction.

War-torn Afghanistan has become a lucrative and unaccountable development gold mine where companies can make millions in net profit. Several international telecommunication companies have descended on the country. A privately owned company manages the Kabul Intercontinental Hotel, paying the government a fraction of its annual million-dollar revenue. Companies with access to the government can easily secure government contracts. For example, the

Emerging Markets Group obtained about US\$30 million for a cadastral survey to determine the boundaries, ownership, and value of landholdings. PETCO, a U.S. corporation, has several establishments in the country, ostensibly focused on introducing modern Western agricultural methods of production and training local farmers. However, its main impact so far has been an expanded market in the country for U.S. agricultural products, and a peasantry made dependent on U.S.-made tools and equipment. Bearing Point provides government consulting services, providing a number of consultants to government agencies who are paid hefty consulting fees. There are an estimated three thousand companies providing consulting services with largely unfettered access to donor nations' funds. The Washington-based Rendon Group, which has ties to the White House, received an estimated US\$56 million contract to launch a public relations campaign designed to boost the image of U.S. construction programs. Its consultants also trained Karzai's office staff and received more than US\$3 million from the Department of Defense to work with the Ministry of the Interior and develop an antinarcotics strategy for Afghanistan. In August 2008 the Pentagon granted US\$40 million to the Falls Church, Virginia-based DynCorp International to build an army base for the country's national army and another US\$18.1 million to build a police complex in Helmand. International companies such as these generate significant profits and their employees make about US\$1,000 or more per day. The impoverished local population does not benefit from this wealth, and the average local employee continues to earn a few dollars a day.

One major impact of development is the transformation of Afghanistan into a market for foreign products and accompanying efforts to promote a Western-style consumer culture, promoted as a symbol of post-Taliban modernity. Warlords, senior government officials, and expatriates lead these efforts as they endeavor to insert their new lifestyles into their former homeland. They are accustomed to shopping in exclusive shopping centers and dining in five-star restaurants offering a variety of cuisine. The U.S.-built supermarket on the Jalalabad Road, a few kilometers from downtown Kabul, is a major consumer establishment built to cater to the Westernized desires and tastes of expatriates. The Kabul Golf Course, situated adjacent to the Qargha Dam, was refurbished and charges US\$10 per game. In Kabul, a number of beauty parlors serve the style needs of Kabul's elite classes. Western fashion corporations such as Revlon, Vogue, and others have also entered the market in Afghanistan and promote their products as symbols of modernity. Boutiques and modern stores such as Roshan

City Tower, the Kabul Center, and others display the latest fashions for affluent families. The vast majority of men and women are unable to afford these luxuries and continue to wear traditional clothing. In the streets where the two groups converge, the contrast is striking.

Refugees returning from Pakistan and Iran found no affordable housing accommodations and continued to live much as they had in the camps, in squalid huts or tents with plastic sheets serving as doors and windows as their only protection from the freezing winter and the heat of summer. Public schools sit unrenovated while expensive private schools were built to cater to the children of warlords and the elite strata. In 2006 the American University of Afghanistan inaugurated its first academic year, charging US\$5,000 tuition and fees per year, a sum that the vast majority of people cannot afford. Islamic warriors who destroyed and burned schools in the 1980s and 1990s and deprived children of an education now send their own children to study at private schools and universities abroad.

PUBLIC DISENCHANTMENT

Public anger is palpable over the government's unfulfilled promises to deliver essential public services. An overwhelming majority of people do not have access to clean drinking water and clinics and hospitals are in bad shape, lacking trained medical staff, equipment, and medicine. Patients wait days in order to be admitted to the hospital and have to bribe officials in order to receive medical treatment. People continue to labor from dawn to dusk to try to feed their families. Children who lost their parents and are supposed to be in school work in markets or on the streets, selling small items and earning between ten and twenty afghani (twenty-five cents) a day. The inability of Karzai to implement any kind of economic relief, along with his failure to reverse or even stem the corruption, has caused people to lose any remaining faith in his government.

The government has failed to create employment opportunities and this has prompted thousands of people to line up every day at the doors of the embassies of Pakistan, Iran, and other Middle Eastern countries for visas. The public has also become disillusioned with the National Assembly, because soon after it resumed official business, instead of supporting policies to improve the lives of the poor and dispossessed, the representatives awarded higher salaries for themselves and privileges that include security guards, expensive vehicles, and so on. Members of the provincial councils soon followed suit. The judiciary remains weak and unable or unwilling to fight administrative

corruption. The people prefer to seek the assistance of former warlords to render judgment on outstanding issues, and refuse to take their cases to a court, as the process takes years and the poor cannot afford to pay the expenses involved. People in positions of authority misuse the intelligence agency to blackmail and control their opponents. Citizens do not see any incentive to support a bureaucracy riddled with corrupt government officials.

Karzai's policy of national reconciliation entrenched the Islamists in the bureaucracy and his weak leadership and inconsistency have further eroded his authority, as he vacillates in his decisions. These factors have caused people to call him the weather man, referring to an actor that plays to different crowds, or to depict him as an American puppet. Whenever U.S. and NATO operations kill innocent people it creates a backlash, as people blame the government for not reining them in. The inability of the government to look after families whose sons joined the security forces or army and died in the line of duty has caused the grieving families to withdraw their support for the government. Although the state provides them a small stipend as a token of its appreciation for their service and praises them as heroes, the money is not enough to help the families sustain themselves, and they are forced to beg for money. The government has also failed to improve the situation women, as violence against women continues. Women are raped, harassed, tortured, and disfigured by men in their family and warlords, and poor families are forced to sell their children and marry their daughters to elderly rich men to escape poverty.

Pashtun nationalists in the government used their position to strengthen Pashtun domination of the country's politics and are engaged in efforts to promote the use of the Pashtu language and punish individuals who use Persian words instead of Pashtu-designated names for government and public institutions. This anti-Persian policy began during the reign of King Mohammad Nadir (1929–33), and this legacy continues to haunt the nation to the present, hampering national unity. By fueling linguistic differences the ruling elites are trying to divert public attention away from their struggle for societal justice. In February 2008 the Minister for Information and Culture took an extreme step in punishing a reporter and two senior staff of National Television for using Persian words such as *danishgah* (university) and *danishkada* (college) instead of the Pashtu words *pohantoon* and *pohanzai*. The minister regarded the use of Persian words by a journalist in Balkh as an offense to the culture and Islam.²⁸ The language controversy became a subject of heated debate between staunch nationalist Pashtun deputies and those of non-Pashtun ethnolinguistic

communities in August 2008 at the National Assembly. The Pashtun nationalists were determined to retain the Pashtu names of government institutions and not allow the inserting of Persian names next to the Pashtu names. This factor caused non-Pashtun ethnic communities to view Karzai as a manifestation of Pashtun nationalism, even though he talks about the equality of ethnic communities.

Transgressions of the *Kochis* into Hazarajat rekindled their ethnic controversy. The government's failure to find a solution to the dispute between the *Kochis* and Hazaras caused the latter to view Karzai as protagonist of the Pashtun drive for political hegemony. Between May and June 2007 a large number of *Kochis* entered Behsud, Wardak, fought the Hazaras, set fire to their houses, and killed a number of people. Many Hazaras abandoned their homes and sought refuge in Kabul and other areas. On June 21, 2007, Hazara warlords mobilized their supporters in Kabul and staged a protest demonstration in front of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), demanding that it exert pressure on the government to put an end to the *Kochis'* violation of their land. The *Kochis* again attacked villagers in Behsud on June 17, 2008, this time claiming the lives of thirteen people, injuring fifty, and causing some seven hundred families to leave their homes. About ten thousand Hazaras organized a protest demonstration on July 22, 2008, in Kabul, arguing that the land in question was not sufficient for the use of local people and demanded the government find a solution to the crisis. Mohammad Mohaqiq, a member of the Commission on Religion and Culture in the House of Representatives, who restrained Hazaras and non-Hazaras alike during the civil war in the 1990s, staged a hunger strike to denounce the *Kochis* intrusion into Hazara land and said he would continue the hunger strike until the government resolved the issue. Hazaras were generally disenchanted with their traditional leaders, and Mohaqiq sought to exploit the *Kochi* issue to his advantage. By going on a hunger strike he hoped to demonstrate that he was a newborn moderate and a civilized leader who defends the rights of the people through nonviolent actions.

Resurgence of the Taliban

Rampant corruption in the government and state failure to improve the economy and deliver basic public services are major contributing factors in the resurgence of the Taliban. Armed opposition to the U.S.-backed government and U.S.-NATO occupation is conducted primarily by the Taliban and its allies, such as the Jalaluddin Haqqani

network, *Hizb-e-Islami* led by Hikmatyar, and *Jamat-e Sunat al-Dawa Salafia*. The Taliban continue to fight government and U.S.-NATO forces primarily in the southern region of the country, while *Hizb-e-Islami* and the forces of Haqqani and *Salafia* fight in the east and northeastern parts of Afghanistan. As early as 2003 the Taliban reorganized their resources and began to fight the United States and the Kabul government. The Taliban claim they fight the enemy of the Muslims, referred to as Pan-Christian crusaders, who are trying to dominate Muslims, however, they also resort to intimidation and violence, murdering individuals on charges of spying for the United States and NATO and leaving their bodies on roadsides for the public to find, sending a message that people will face a similar fate if they work against them. They have murdered aid agency workers and declared they will pay US\$250 for killing civil service personnel or those working for the state intelligence agency. They oppose women's involvement in the public arena and their receiving an education. On November 12, 2008, two men riding a motorcycle stopped two students of the Mirwais Girls School in Qandahar, pulled off their scarves and sprayed their faces with acid. A few days later, the culprits were arrested and confessed that "a high ranking militant head paid the men to plan and carry out the attack. The payment, totaling about \$2,000 was said to have taken the form of a bounty for each student or teacher they managed to burn."²⁹

The Taliban exploits poverty and recruits people who are desperate and unable to feed their family, trains them, and sends them to fight for their cause. One of the Taliban's most potent weapons in the fight against the United States, NATO, and the Kabul government is the suicide attack. Such attacks were not common during the Soviet occupation, but have come into wider use since the United States invaded the country. In 2003 there were two suicide attempts; the number of attempts has increased dramatically in subsequent years, killing U.S. and NATO troops as well as civilians and government officials. On November 6, 2007, a suicide bomber detonated his devices, killing a parliamentary delegation visiting a school in Pol-e-Khumri and injuring scores of students and bystanders. The Haqqani group is alleged to have masterminded the attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul in January 2008 and an attack on a military parade celebrating the anniversary of the seizure of power by Islamic warriors in April 2008, killing three people; Karzai escaped unharmed. The Taliban carried out another attack on July 7, 2008, as a car bomb exploded at the gate of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, adjacent to the Ministry of the Interior, killing fifty-eight people.³⁰ Kabul condemns Pakistan's intelligence

agency, the ISI, for training and supporting the Taliban for suicide attacks on civilians and government installations, and for the car bomb at the Indian Embassy, however, Pakistan always denies supporting the Taliban: "The CIA and ISI have debated in recent years what to do with Haqqani. The ISI has argued that the commander could potentially be integrated into the Kabul government's security apparatus, potentially winning additional support for Hamid Karzai's government from Afghanistan's sizable Pashtun population. The US has concluded that Haqqani and his son, Siraj Haqqani, have grown too close to *Al-Qaeda* to be part of any reconciliation process."³¹

The Taliban derives income not only from poppy cultivation and drug trafficking but also from payoffs from local businessmen. When local contractors and companies receive funding for development projects from donor nations they pay protection fees to the Taliban to let their enterprise do their work. For example, local contractors in charge of building the multibillion dollar ring road around Afghanistan, which is funded by the World Bank, USAID, and other international donors, pay a huge amount of money to the Taliban to not disrupt their projects. Kidnapping for ransom and contributions from sympathizers within and outside the country sustain the Taliban, and Iran and Pakistan continue to influence political events in Afghanistan. The western province of Herat, the central region of Hazarajat, and Hazara-settled regions in the northern provinces are the primary targets of influence by Iran. Although government officials in Herat have repeatedly accused Iran of supporting the training of antistate groups in camps in Iran, Kabul has not made any formal complaints against Iran.

Growing instability and suicide attacks caused the United States to exert pressure on Pakistan to curb the Taliban's movements in Pakistan. Although Pakistan continues to turn a blind eye to the Taliban, it works to appease the United States and the international community, stating that it is against terrorism. As a show of faith, Pakistan arrested a few senior Taliban leaders, including Mullah Zarif, former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Mullah Jalil, former deputy foreign minister and a close aide to Mullah Omar, Abdul Latif Hakimi, a Taliban spokesperson, and senior Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah, who later escaped and was killed in a military operation by U.S. forces. Pakistan launched military operations in South Waziristan to flush out Islamic militants, and signed a peace agreement with the tribal militants in North Waziristan on September 5, 2006. It is suggested that the Taliban leader Mullah Omar played a key role and authorized the agreement with the government.

Afghanistan continues to blame Pakistan for interference in its internal affairs. This has strained relations between the two countries to the extent that on November 3, 2006, Pakistan claimed that Kabul had provided shelter to Brahmdag Bugti, grandson of the slain Baluchi leader Nawab Akbar Bugti, and demanded his extradition to Pakistan. It is believed that Bugti designated his grandson to succeed him prior to his murder by the Pakistani army. Similarly Pakistan accused Afghanistan's National Security Directorate of having a hand in the disturbances in the frontier areas of the NWFP. As a result of growing U.S. pressure and the promise of financial and technical support, Pakistan gave in and in February arrested senior Taliban leaders who were no longer useful to its vested interest. The arrested included the ex-governor of Nangarhar Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, ex-governor of Qunduz Mullah Abdul Salam, ex-governor of Baghlan Mullah Mir Mohammad, and Taliban Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani, alias Bardar, among others. Pakistan continues to support neo-Taliban and other fundamentalist Jihadi factions who remain loyal and submissive to Islamabad, and through them Pakistan influences the direction of Afghanistan's political development. Afghanistan will continue to remain under the political and cultural influence of Pakistan and Iran in the future because, for more than two decades, its citizens have lived in these two countries, influenced by the host country's politics and culture. Their children attended schools there and some have been recruited by the host country's intelligence agencies to work for them upon their return home. Some of these returnees have posts in the state bureaucracy.

The escalation of armed insurgency compelled U.S. President Barack Obama to deploy additional troops to Afghanistan to turn the tide of the war in favor of the United States and NATO forces and the government of Afghanistan so that the Taliban would not disrupt the presidential election on August 20, 2009. Karzai once was favored by Washington and promoted a hope for change to the people of Afghanistan, who suffered through years of exploitation and misery under the rule of Islamic warriors. Now both the United States and the people of Afghanistan view him as a feckless leader who is part of the problem and endemic corruption. The U.S. secretary of state went so far as to refer to the Karzai administration as a narco-state.

During the presidential campaign the candidates portrayed themselves as moderate, liberal, republican, and democrats, trying to appeal to voters and gain Western support. Thirty-two individuals contested the election, including incumbent president Karzai. Most candidates lacked public support and participated simply for the sake

of name recognition in the political arena, to gain a post in the new government, or for financial compensation by striking deals with other candidates.

To ensure his reelection, Karzai sought support from tribal chiefs and former warlords, made Fahim his running mate as the first vice president, and retained Khalili as his running mate for the second vice president position. He reconciled with Dostam, rescinding charges against him, and invited him to return to Afghanistan to help him garner votes from the Uzbeks.

The Taliban declared that they would disrupt the election and threatened to amputate fingers marked with indelible ink—the ink was intended to deter double voting. Fading public support for Karzai's leadership and Taliban threats were the reasons why the number of people participating in the election was lower than the turnout in the 2004 presidential election. Election officials closed down almost 5 percent of polling stations because of security concerns. The Taliban fired several missiles and carried out a series of suicide attacks in Kabul and other areas on the day of the election, killing several people, including election officials. They chopped off the nose and finger of Lal Mohammad of Gizab after he cast his ballot.

The election was marred with allegations of fraud and vote rigging. In some areas ballot boxes were stuffed in favor of Karzai or the number of ballots did not correspond to the number of voters. Despite these issues, on September 16 the Independent Election Commission released the preliminary results of the election. There were 5,662,758 valid votes, 173,200 invalid votes, and 82,783 invalidated votes, for a total of 5,918,741 votes cast. Karzai, obtained 3,093,256 votes (54.6 percent), and his main challenger Abdullah received 1,571,581 (27.8 percent). Karzai's opponents and the international community accused him of widespread fraud. Peter Galbraith, a U.S. diplomat serving as the UN deputy special representative in Afghanistan, accused his chief Kay Eide of helping cover up electoral fraud. Galbraith was forced to leave his job and Eide resigned from his post in March 2010. As the fraud charges mounted, the UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) declared over one million ballots to be invalid. Karzai's earlier lead evaporated to about 48.3 percent, below the threshold of an outright victory. The Independent Election Commission conferred with the ECC and declared that a runoff election would be held on November 7, 2009.

The United States and its allies pressured Karzai to acquiesce to the ECC's decision and prepare for a runoff election. The United States intended to use the runoff election to justify deployment of

additional troops to defend the government. Most people were disenchanted with the corrupt system of governance and were unwilling to risk their lives by going to the polling stations to cast their votes again, as many believed that the United States would decide who would lead the country. Abdullah's limited base of support and external pressure compelled him to withdraw from the race. However, he cited undemocratic electoral procedures as the ostensible reason for his decision.³² This left Karzai with no one to run against, removing his opportunity to legitimize his victory. Karzai and the Independent Election Commission, under external pressure, decided to not hold a runoff election, and Karzai was declared the winner and president of the country.³³ The United States and its allies backpedaled from their earlier insistence for a runoff election and sent out anodyne public statements congratulating Karzai on his victory, declaring that the United States and its coalition partners would continue to work with his administration to reform the state bureaucracy in an attempt to stabilize the country. The election was exploited to create a basis for credibility for a system of governance that is detached from the public and continues to suffer from a crisis of legitimacy. Given this situation, there can be no quick solution to end the ferocious cycle of poverty and corruption in Afghanistan, as the same circle of players still runs Afghanistan, including those who have violated basic human rights.

THE U.S.-NATO FAILURE OF STABILIZATION

Operation Enduring Freedom was intended to eliminate terrorism, establish a credible governing system, and rebuild the country's economic and political infrastructures in the post-Taliban period, however, it failed to achieve any of the stated objectives. Violence is on the rise and the writ of government is confined to the capital city, Kabul, causing people to call Karzai the city's mayor. Government agencies are riddled with inefficiency and corruption. Warlords who violated human rights enjoy immunity from prosecution and continue to harass those who do not support their leadership. Although the Taliban brutalized people during their rule, an angry woman expressed her disgust with Karzai for coopting violators of human rights into the government, stating, "I watched the Taliban stone rapists and now the rapists are in the government."³⁴ With about sixty-eight thousand U.S. Army troops equipped with sophisticated weaponry and some thirty-three thousand NATO troops, the United States and NATO are losing the war, as they have already lost the hearts and minds of the people. When the Taliban targets U.S. forces, the United States

exerts pressure on the public to identify those responsible—an action that further alienates the people. During an attack on its military base in Bagram, Kabul, the United States used a combination of coercion and rewards to obtain cooperation in identifying the attackers:

American commanders have learned that there are ways to get the locals to talk, and identify the people firing the rocket. The most useful method is to halt reconstruction projects, or shut down the weekly bazaar (where local Afghans can sell goods to the thousands of troops and civilians on the base). Either of these moves costs the local Afghan economy thousands of dollars a week. In a country where \$20 a month is a good salary, that kind of loss is felt . . . Afghans often settle disputes in terms of money. That's an ancient tradition that survives in the West in the form of fines levied by judges. For the Afghans, the identity of a guilty Afghan is worth only so much in economic losses . . . The Afghans recognize the concept of blood feud and can understand that angry American soldiers, eager to get revenge, might be something to avoid.³⁵

The U.S. Army defends the government, but the people are increasingly victimized by the bombings carried out on the pretext of destroying suspected Taliban hideouts. A major anti-U.S. demonstration occurred in Kabul on May 29, 2006, when a U.S. armored tank hit a civilian vehicle, killing one and injuring six. When the demonstrators threw stones at the U.S. troops they fired on the crowds, killing twenty and injuring scores of others. The angry crowd, which was tacitly supported by Islamic warriors inside and outside the government, marched on the streets in Kabul chanting “Death to America” and “Death to Karzai,” and set fire to NGOs and their guesthouses and looted their properties. While civilians continue to die as a result of the U.S. war on terrorism, the United States denies killing civilians, and when public anger rises, Karzai steps in to calm down the people by offering them compensation. For example, on July 17, 2008, Karzai flew to Deh Bala, a remote village in the eastern region of the country bordering Pakistan, where U.S. bombing killed forty-seven civilians at a wedding party on July 6. The angry crowd shouted that Karzai must hand over those responsible to the people to be hanged, according to the requirements of the local tradition. Karzai met tribal chiefs in an attempt to assuage their anger and exploited the peoples’ religious sentiments, promising to send every head of the victims’ families on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.³⁶ At the same time Karzai expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the United States

for defending the country and awarded medals to U.S. and NATO officers. Iraqi journalist Muntather Zaidi threw his shoes at U.S. President George W. Bush on December 14, 2008, accusing him of killing innocent people. The next day Karzai awarded Bush the Afghanistan Medal of Honor for defending the country against terrorism.

Arresting innocent civilians and keeping them in detention without evidence proving their complicity with the Taliban further alienated the people from the United States and Karzai's government. During house-to-house searches for weapons and suspected insurgents, U.S. forces did not respect the local traditions or people's privacy. They stormed houses, handcuffed suspects while pressing their faces to the dirty ground with their boots, and placed black hoods on their heads and took them away. Citizens were subjected to all types of torture since the Soviet occupation, however an outraged weeping man stated that people were not subjected to such a violent approach "during Soviet times, under the Taliban, even during the civil war, no one dared break into a man's home. No one, even if the Taliban came to execute you, they knocked on the door politely and waited for you."³⁷ It is because of this that people increasingly view the Americans as occupiers.

Although there is a coalition of international forces to fight the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, there is no coalition of will among participating countries and no cohesive strategy to coordinate their resources, as every participating member nation has its own mandate and regions in which to deploy its troops. The U.S. and NATO forces fight a war that has no meaning to many of their soldiers, while the Taliban and Islamic fighters from other countries fight the United States and NATO for the promise of being rewarded in life after death. The U.S. policy of integrating military and humanitarian works is another factor that has contributed to U.S. failure to stabilize the country, as the PRT is effectively used as a propaganda tool. The PRT provides the poor with aid and projects in exchange for information on the insurgency and public loyalty. Most PRT staff do not possess relevant expertise for the project and lack a basic understanding of the cultural dynamics of the people. Instead of gaining the people's support, they alienate them with their inept actions and behavior. Development projects are not the military's domain and should be tasked to local institutions.

The failure of U.S. policy to stabilize the country is also the result of its misguided policy of rebuilding the country's security apparatus. The police forces have increasingly been militarized. They are provided with two weeks of training and are then deployed to fight the

insurgency rather than providing them with comprehensive training to enable them to maintain law and order and protect the public. Most policemen have little or no education, and receiving a few weeks of training is not going to help them develop the skills and principles needed to serve the community.

The U.S. failure also stems from the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitics of the region, as those in the decision-making apparatus view Afghanistan as a single political entity. Afghanistan is a heterogeneous nation comprising different ethnolinguistic communities with strong tribal and regional loyalties that hamper national unity. The United States did not formulate comprehensive policies of nation building around this nucleus of local structures. Ethnic groups continue to nurture the concept of a federal system of government, but Pashtun nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists vehemently oppose such an arrangement. Failure to stabilize the situation is rooted in misguided U.S. policy, as when it engineered the Bonn meeting for laying down a political framework in the post-Taliban period. A Persian expression states that if the initial building bricks are set tilted the entire building suffers structural flaws and may crumble. This is also applicable to the policy of nation building in the post-Taliban period. The United States invited Islamic warriors to the Bonn meeting, but excluded the Taliban and did not give due weight and support to secular progressive, patriotic, and democratic groups in the political process and reconstruction efforts, and instead relied exclusively on Pashtun loyalists to form a government. This initiative failed to establish the progressive centrist government desperately needed to unite the people and rebuild the country's economic and political infrastructures.

The policy of rebuilding the country on the basis of a top-down approach was flawed from the beginning. It was not based on a participatory approach that encouraged people to become part of the decision making process and its implementation. Billions in aid money for rebuilding and development has been misused and no agency is accountable for it. The international community did not make the provision of funding contingent on comprehensive reforms and failed to exert timely needed pressure on the government to remove corrupt officials who intentionally hampered political and institutional reforms. Accountability and transparency are popular phrases, but this policy is difficult to implement and fails if people are not involved in the process from the inception of the policy through its implementation. Although there are a number of civil society groups, decisions were made by the government in consultation with professionals who

are mainly expatriates, including individuals of Afghani origin who have only scant knowledge or out of date knowledge of the country's history, culture, and ethnolinguistic sensitivities and frictions. When policies are designed without consulting legitimate interest groups, the result is that public trust in the government erodes and people feel alienated and disinclined to support government directives.

CONCLUSION

The post-Taliban state remains dependent on the United States for military, political, and economic support, and its failure to restore stability and improve people's standard of living has caused some writers and scholars to refer to it as a failed state. The term "failed state" is a convenient phrase that is used to blame the people, who are not educated or have little education, for problems associated with nation building. The term camouflages the role of external actors in the failure of government, as leaders are imposed upon the people and external forces support them politically, financially, and militarily to remain in power. The British installed Shah Shuja to the throne in the early nineteenth century and the Russians imposed Karmal and Najibullah on the people in the 1980s. People generally despised these leaders and therefore they failed to rally the people in support of their leadership. The United States and its allies supported Islamic fundamentalists to fight Soviet imperialism and indirectly helped the Taliban, a group that presented a cruel, uncivilized, and a distorted image of Islam to establish and consolidate their rule. The United States installed Karzai as head of state in 2001 and he included warlords in a government whose policies and practices since the early 1990s led to the destruction of the country's infrastructure and curtailment of people's rights and liberties. The Taliban and their allies view the U.S.-backed government as illegitimate and declared that they will continue to fight until foreign forces leave the country.

The U.S. occupation of Afghanistan was touted as liberation of a people, one that heralded democracy, and a leadership accountable to its constituents. Instead of supporting federalism it helped establish a vertically centralized system of governance that is in sharp contradiction to public expectations and the realities of a tribal society that historically was decentralized. Although presidential and parliamentary elections were held and viewed as democracy in the making, elected officials with long track records of human rights violations are not accountable to the public. Political parties were barred from the presidential and parliamentary elections, not because citizens did not have

a good impression of the parties, but because the government actively intended to avoid confrontations with political parties.

Nation building, instead of giving priority to laying down mechanisms for accountability and involving individuals with honesty, integrity, and commitment to the cause of the people and nation, worked to favor individuals with blind loyalty—individuals motivated by liberal and free-market ideology to maximize their gains and who lack social distinction and are easily corrupted. The political culture of democracy—secularism—is a prerequisite for democracy to take root. Democracy cannot be promoted by anti-democratic forces—Islamic warriors whose values are contradictory to democratic norms and culture. Democracy can only take root when the state's policy of development is transcendental and free of ethnic chauvinism, tribalism, and regionalism. Democracy functions if people believe that they are the intended beneficiaries of state development policies and democratic process is not an instrument of coercion by the entrenched political group. A democratically elected leader derives legitimacy from the people, remains accountable to them and becomes transcendental in his/her policies toward diverse cultural, tribal, and ethnic communities.

Afghanistan remains divided along sectarian, ethnic, and regional lines and individuals who claim to represent all tribal and ethnic communities and regions have failed to become transcendental in their views and actions. Ex-king Zahir was recognized as *Baba-e-Millat*, but Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and even most Pashtuns do not regard him as such. For political reasons Masoud was called a national hero, but his influence was limited mainly to his own community, the Tajiks. The Hazaras called Mazari by the title *Baba Mazari* (Father Mazari), but he too was not accepted as such by the Hazaras of Ismaili and Sunni traditions, nor by other ethnic communities. Dostam is called a national leader by his own ethnic group, the Uzbeks, but other ethnic groups revile him for his repeated violations of human rights. These leaders imposed themselves upon their people and dealt fatal blows to revolutionaries, nationalists, and patriots who disagreed with their politics, including those in their own ethnic community. In a similar vein, Karzai could not establish himself as a national leader, as he was propelled to the office largely by U.S. military intervention and the charges of massive fraud and vote rigging in the 2009 presidential elections further damaged his fledgling leadership and the credibility of his administration.

Democracy cannot take root under the weight of imperial powers that seek only to identify and install or support individuals who can

win elections and serve their vested interests, rather than the interest of the people. Imperial powers are to be condemned for the failed state, as they are both policy makers and executioners. A poem by the famous Persian poet Omar Khayyam aptly reflects imperial characteristics:

And strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?³⁸

The United States exploits the growing insurgency by the Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* to justify its military presence in Afghanistan and uses the country as a base to expand its imperial influence in central Asia, to exploit the rich natural resources of the region, and to contain its rival imperial powers—China and Russia. Thus Afghanistan will continue to remain under U.S. domination and citizens of the country will suffer under cliental leaders who are not accountable to them, but accountable and subordinate to their imperial patrons. The Republicans initiated the war on terrorism and continue to remain its staunch supporter. The current U.S. administration, dominated by the Democrats, claims to fight for peace, but continues the war that claims the lives of citizens in Afghanistan and coalition soldiers. Growing instability in Afghanistan, compounded with long-standing Pashtun fervor for a greater Pashtunistan, will result in the further destabilization of a nuclear neighbor and the emboldening of an aspiring regional player in the Middle East.

GLOSSARY

Afghan Millat. Afghan Nation. Name of the political party that adhered to Pashtun nationalist ideology.

Afghan. A citizen of Afghanistan. Originally used to refer to Pashtun tribes while other citizens were referred to by their ethnic designations. The country's constitution recognizes all ethnolinguistic communities and individuals residing in the country as Afghans.

Afghanistan Compact. The outcome of a conference on Afghanistan held in London on February 26, 2006. Donor nations gathered to establish the structure of Afghanistan's reconstruction and to represent the participating nations' political commitments.

afghani. The currency of Afghanistan.

amir. Prince, chief. In Afghanistan the Sadozai Pashtun rulers adopted the title "king" or "shah," but the Mohammadzai Pashtun rulers from 1826 adopted the title "amir" until King Amanullah adopted the title of "king" in 1926. The title "amir" to the Islamic resistance groups meant a commander in the civil and military sphere.

Amri Bilmarof wa Nabi al-Munkir. Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. This department implemented the Taliban's strict vision of *Sharia* law.

azan. In Islam, the call for prayers.

Baba-e-Millat. Father of the Nation. An honorary title conferred upon ex-king Zahir in 2002 by the emergency *Loya Jirgah*.

begari. Impressed labor, also known as *corvée*. Labor that people in power have authority to compel their subjects to perform, sometimes without compensation.

chadari. A veil or mantle worn by women that covers their body from head to toe with only a small lattice opening for the eyes.

Club-e-Milli. National Club. A political organization formed to facilitate Mohammad Daoud's rise to power as prime minister.

Constitutional *Loya Jirgah* (CLJ). Constitutional Grand Assembly convened from December 13, 2003, to January 4, 2004, in Kabul to ratify the constitution.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). A UN-sponsored initiative launched in 2002 to disarm and disband private militias and help integrate their members into civil society.

Durand Line. The boundary between Afghanistan and British India that separates Pashtuns and Baluchis between Afghanistan and present-day Pakistan; created by the Duran Agreement concluded by Abd al-Rahman and the British government in 1893.

Ettihad-e-Marksist-Leninistha-e-Afghanistan. Union of Marxist-Leninist of Afghanistan (EMLA). Formed in a failed attempt to unite revolutionary political organizations into a single party in the 1980s.

fatwa. A judicial decree or sentence handed down by a judge. Also known as a *fatwa*.

ghulam bacha. Eunuchs in a palace *harem*.

Grub-e-haftganah. Alliance of Seven. Reference to seven prominent Sunni resistance groups.

hadith (pl. *ahadith*). The Prophet Muhammad's responses in words and deeds to a wide range of events.

hakim. Philosopher, sage, a man considered to be wise.

harakat. Movement.

Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan.

Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. Islamic Movement of Afghanistan. A *Shia* Islamic party in the 1980s and 1990s.

hijab. Refers both to the veil and the modest style of wearing the veil and being private; moral.

hizb. Party or political sect.

Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan. Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Pro-Soviet political party with two main factions: *Khalq* (Masses) and *Parcham* (Banner).

Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. Islamic Party of Afghanistan. Sunni political party in the 1980s and 1990s.

Hizb-e-Rad-e-Islami. Islamic Thunder organization. *Shia* Islamic party in the 1980s and 1990s.

Hizb-e-Wahdat. Unity Party. Alliance of several *Shia* political parties.

Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. Islamic Party of National Unity of Afghanistan.

Hizbollah. Party of God. *Shia* political organization in the 1980s and 1990s.

ijtihad. Practice of divine science or theology (by *ulama* [religious scholars]).

imam. Divinely authorized interpreter of the *Quran* and leader of the community.

ISI. Inter-Services Intelligence. Pakistan's intelligence agency.

Jabba-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan. National Salvation Front of Afghanistan. Traditionalist Sunni political party in the 1980s and 1990s.

Jabba-e-Milli-Padar Watan. National Fatherland Front. Pro-Soviet political organization.

Jabba-e-Mubarizin-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan. Afghanistan Revolutionary Mujahidin Front. A group of militant Islamic and radical organizations.

Jabba-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan. National United Front of Afghanistan. Political front formed to fight the Soviet occupation army.

Jamaat-e-Islami. Islamic Association. Islamic organization in Pakistan that supported its counterpart in Afghanistan.

Jamiat al-Ulama. Society of Islamic Scholars.

jamiat. Assembly, community.

Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan. Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA).

Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. Islamic Society of Afghanistan. Fundamentalist Sunni political party.

jihad. Literally, "striving in Allah's path," commonly translate to mean a holy war, the objective of which is either the expansion or defense of Islam.

jihadis, *jihadist*. Someone who wages jihad.

Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). Formed to monitor and supervise the process of presidential and parliamentary elections.

Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan. National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan.

kafir. Infidel or heathen.

kaniz. Odalisques; female slaves in a palace *harem*.

KHAD. See *Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat*.

Khalq. Masses. Faction of the PDPA.

- Kochis*. Decamped migrants; nomads who migrate from one region to another in search of livelihood. Usually refers to Pashtun nomads.
- Kumita-e-Markazi-e Enqilabiyun-e-Afghanistan*. Central Committee of the Afghan Revolutionaries (CCAR). Group that agitated for the overthrow of the monarchy.
- Loya Jirgah*. Grand Assembly of tribal leaders.
- madrasa*. School; usually used to refer to a religious school.
- Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*. National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. Traditionalist Sunni political party in the 1980s and 1990s.
- maktab*. School; usually used to refer to a secular school.
- mawlawi*. A learned man. In Sunni tradition the *ulama* are popularly known by the title of *mawlawi*.
- mehr*. Marriage portion; money given to the bride as insurance against divorce.
- Milli Jirgah*. Grand Assembly.
- muhtasibs*. Religious enforcement officials.
- mujahid, mujahidin*. Islamic warrior(s).
- mullah*. Cleric or religious leader; one who is filled with religious knowledge.
- Nahzat-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan*. National Movement of Afghanistan, also known as the Nahzat Party.
- Operation Agat (Agate)*. December 27, 1979, operation that launched the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- Parcham*. Banner. Faction of the PDPA.
- Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*. Guardians of the Islamic *Jihad* of Afghanistan. Shia Islamic party in the 1980s and 1990s.
- PDPA. See *Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan*.
- Peshawar Agreement*. An agreement concluded on April 24, 1992, that provided the two-stage framework for an interim government in Afghanistan.
- qazi*. A judge or magistrate. In the Islamic tradition the *ulama* are popularly known by the title of *qazi* when they hold judicial office.
- Quran*. The central religious text of Islam.
- sakhtamanha-e-poodari*. Narcotecture. Opulent houses, markets, and other structures built from the proceeds of narcotics trafficking.
- sardar*. Commander, generalissimo. Title reserved for members of the ruling family.
- sayyed*. Someone who traces his lineage to the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali through his wife Fatima, the prophet's daughter.
- sazman*. Organization.
- Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Zahmatkashan-e-Afghanistan*. Organization for Freedom of the Toilers of Afghanistan (SAZA), split from the pro-Soviet PDPA party. The organization's sole objective was to fight national oppression and demand justice and equality for national minorities.
- Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan*. Peoples' Liberation Organization of Afghanistan (SAMA). Revolutionary political organization that emphasized the formation of a working-class party, united front, and a people's army.
- Sazman-e-Demokratik-e-Nawin-e-Afghanistan*. Neo-Democratic Organization of Afghanistan, also known as *Shula-e-Jawid* (Eternal Flame). Revolutionary organization that adhered to the political ideology of the Communist Party of China headed by Mao Tse-tung.
- Sazman-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan*. Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). An anti-Soviet revolutionary organization.
- Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman*. Islamic Youth Organization, also known as *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Islamic Brotherhood).

- Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaq-e-Kargar*. Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class, also known as *Akhgar*. A revolutionary splinter group that emphasized building a working-class party.
- Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin*. Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed. Shia political organization in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Sazman-e-Nasr-e-Enqilab-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*. Victory Organization for Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan. Pro-Iranian Shia Islamic party formed in 1979 with the objective to unite the Shias, mobilize them against the Kabul regime, and fight for the establishment of an Islamic state.
- Sazman-e-Paikar Baray-e-Azadi-e-Afghanistan*. Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan, also known as *Paikar*.
- Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan*. Afghanistan Liberation Organization (ALO).
- Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei* (SAWO). Organization of the True Patriots.
- Sayum-e-Aqrab*. The third day in the Islamic calendar. Refers to a major antistate rally by students in Kabul on October 25, 1965.
- Sharia*. A divine or religious law.
- shura*. Council.
- Shura-e-Enqilabi-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*. Revolutionary Council for the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan.
- Shura-e-Milli*. National Assembly. Afghanistan's legislative body, composed of the House of Representatives and House of Elders, or Senate.
- Shura-e-Wilayati*. Provincial councils.
- talib*. Student; one who searches.
- Taliban*. Sunni Islamic movement comprised mainly of Pashtuns espousing a radical Islamic theology. Members studied at *madrasas* (religious schools).
- tanzim*. Resistance group.
- Treaty of Rawalpindi*. Treaty signed on August 8, 1919, recognizing Afghanistan's independence after the British defeat in the Third Anglo-Afghan War.
- ulama*. Religious scholars or authority.
- ummah*. Civil society.
- waqf*. Endowment; a pious legacy or bequest.
- wazir*. Minister.
- wilayat*. Province.
- Wishzalmayan*. Awakened Youth. A political organization that advocated constitutional monarchy, free and democratic elections, and civil liberties.
- Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (WAD). Ministry of State Security. The Soviet-backed regime's intelligence agency. Formerly known as *Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Security Service) and by its acronym KHAD.
- zakat*. A religious tax on assets and liquidity.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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67. Melville, "Coups and Killings in Kabul," 33–34.
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15. Mohammad Akram Andishmand, “Nigahi ba kodata-e Saur 1357” [A glance at the April coup of 1978], unpublished paper.
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23. Ghulam Sakhi Rahmani, *Charchata-e-Sari Chawk-e-Kabul* (Peshawar, Pakistan: Al-Azhar Publications, 1382/ 2003), 359.
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26. Discussion with an informed revolutionary intellectual in exile.
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INDEX

- 1978 April coup (*Saur* revolution), 87–88, 101–14, 121, 162. *See also* Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA)
- Abdali. *See* Durani, Ahmad Shah (Abdali) (king)
- Abu Ali Cina* (Avecinna School), 53, 102
- Adalat, Ghulam Haidar, 58
- afghantsy*, 6, 7, 122
- Afghan*, origin of name, 11, 21
- Afghan Millat* (Afghan Nation), 70–71, 122, 178. *See also* political organizations
- Afghanistan civil war, 171–77; destruction from, 2, 167, 177, 187; impact on economy, 226; tribal and regional conflict as cause of, 174–77. *See also* reconstruction
- Afghanistan civil war of 1929, 34–35. *See also* Habibullah (king)
- Afghanistan Commission on Strengthening Peace, 230
- Afghanistan Compact*, 226
- Afghanistan-e-Azad*, 53
- Afghanistan Interim Government (AIG), 125, 134; established by Bonn Agreement (2001), 209–11. *See also* Masoud, Ahmad Shah; Mojaddadi, Sebghatullah; Rabbani, Burhanuddin
- Afghanistan Liberation Organization (*Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* [ALO]), 153, 159. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Afghanistan-Pakistan confederation, 60. *See also* Pashtunistan
- Afghanistan's Revolutionary *Mujahidin* Front (*Jabha-e-Mubarizin-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan*), 155
- Afzal, Mohammad, 15
- agriculture, 2, 53, 81, 83; opium cultivation, 185, 226–29. *See also* economy
- Ahmad, Faiz, 153, 159–60
- Ahmad, Gul, 155
- Akbari, Mohammad, 141, 145, 160, 191. *See also* *Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Guardians of the Islamic *Jihad* of Afghanistan)
- Akhgar*, 153–55. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Ali, Liyaqat, 57
- Ali, Shir (king), and relations with Britain, 15
- al-Qaeda, 192–95; and Taliban, 205–7, 209, 211–12
- Amanullah (king), 19–31, 124; and Constitution (1923), 20–21; and Durand agreement (1893), 16–17; educational reforms, 21–23; exile, 31; independence speech, 18–19; modernization programs, 20–30; rebellions against, 16–17, 28; reform backlash, 29–30
- Amin, Abdullah, 110, 117
- Amin, Asadullah, 113, 115, 118
- Amin, Hafizullah, 70, 76, 100–103, 107–8, 163, rise to power, 110–16; assassination plot by gang of four, 111–12; diplomatic overtures to Pakistan and United States, 115, 163; rebellion against, 135; repressive measures against opponents, 114–17
- Amri Bilmarof wa Nabi al-Munkir* (Bureaucracy for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), 182–83. *See also* Taliban
- Angar, Faiz Mohammad, 50–51

- Anglo-Afghan wars, 5, 6, 15–16, 129; and Burnes, Alexander, 15
- antistate activities, 52, 65: dissident movements and uprisings, 74–75, 110, 134–36, 148, 151–52; against Amanullah, 15–17, 28; against Habibullah, 33–34, 46; against Hafizullah Amin, 135; *Bala Hisar* insurrection, 155; Chindawool Ghetto rebellion, 136; Khost rebellion, 25–26; Pakiya rebellion, 28, 119, 136; and Red Shirt movement, 20, 30, 50; student demonstrations, 74–75, 148, 151–52; worker strikes, 148–51. *See also* political unrest
- Arabs, 4; and government resettlement policies, 54
- Arab states, role in recruiting fighters for Islamic fundamentalist cause, 178; support of Islamic fundamentalists, 139
- Aziz, Abdul Hay, 50, 52
- Baba-e-Millat* (Father of the Nation), 212, 214
- Bala Hisar* fort, 15–16; *Bala Hisar* insurrection, 155. *See also* antistate activities
- Balkhi, Sayed Ismail, 129–31
- Baluchis, and Durand Line, 3, 16; and guerrilla warfare in Pakistan, 94–95; and Pashtunistan issue, 59–60
- Bamiyan, fall to Taliban and massacre of Hazaras, 191
- banking and foreign investment, 46–48, 79–84; and Decree no. 6 (loans and mortgages), 105–6; nationalization of banking system, 90–91
- Battle of Parwan, 12–13
- begari* (impressed labor), 51
- Behsud, Wardak province, and Hazara-*Kochi* conflict, 236
- Bihishti, Sayed Ali, 141–42, 144–45. *See also* *Shura-e-Itifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan)
- bin Laden, Osama, 191, funding of Taliban, 192; and al-Qaeda, 194–95, 206
- blue-collar workers, 91–92, 147, 149. *See also* social class; worker strikes
- Bokharis, and government resettlement policies, 54
- Bonn Agreement (2001), 209–11, 244
- Brezhnev, Leonid, 99–100, 108, 111; defends Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, 117
- Britain, 15–16, 129; and Anglo-Afghan wars, 5, 6; and Battle of Parwan, 13; and colonialism, 11–12, 14–16; defends British occupation of Afghanistan, 13; and divide and conquer policy, 14; and Durand Line, 56–57; and Gandumak Treaty (1879), 15; and Khost rebellion, 25–26; and Rawalpindi Treaty (1919), 19; and reconstruction, 230; relations with Afghanistan, 12, 18–20, 30, 42–43, 48; rivalry with Russians, 12, 20
- British India, 12–15, 20, 30
- Bureaucracy for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (*Amri Bilmarof wa Nabi al-Munkir*), 182–83. *See also* Taliban
- Burnes, Alexander, 15. *See also* Anglo-Afghan wars
- Bush, George W., 205, 206, 243
- Cheney, Richard, 205, 221
- China, support of Islamic fundamentalism, 160
- Chindawool Ghetto rebellion, 136
- Civil Movement of Afghanistan (*Nahzat-e-Madani-e-Afghanistan*), 221
- civil war of 1929, 34–35
- class. *See* social class
- clergy. *See* *Mullahs* (clerics)
- Club-e-Milli* (National Club), role in Mohammad Daoud's rise to power, 58
- colonialism, 11–12, 14–16
- communications and film industry, 81. *See also* media
- Communist Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Afghanistan* [CPA]), 153, 161. *See also* People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA); political organizations, revolutionary
- Constitution: (1923), 20–21; (1931), 39; (1964), 67–70, 147; (1977), 92; (1979), 109; (1980, interim), 120, 122; (1987), 122; (1992), 171; (2004), 213–14, 218
- Constitutional Advisory Commission, 67–68
- Constitutional Commission, 213
- Constitutional *Loya Jirgah* (CLJ), 213
- Constitutional Monarchy (1964–73), 66–86, 148
- Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan (*Shura-e-Itifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 144, 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia

- Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Aidara* (Organization for the Protection of the Security of Afghanistan [AGSA]), 110, 113. See also *Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* (Workers Intelligence Agency [KAM])
- Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* (Workers Intelligence Agency [KAM]), 113, 118. See also *Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Information Service [KHAD])
- Daoud, Mohammad (prime minister, 1953–63, president, 1973–78), 49; assassination, 101; elected president, 90–93; engineers coup, 87–88; establishes Club-e-Milli (National Club), 58; foreign policy, 61–63, 93–98; opposition to policies, 65–66, 133–34; and Pashtun nationalism, 94–95; and Pashtunistan, 94–95, 115; and Radio Pashtunistan, 94; and PDPA, 87–90, 99; as president, 87–101; as Prime Minister, 58–66; reforms, 90–91; rise to power, 85–86; and statism, 59–73; suppression of Islamic Movement, 133–34; unveiling of women, 64–65. See also Republican regime (1973–78)
- Dari* (Persian), 3, 67–69, 77
- Dawi, Abdul Hadi, 50–51
- Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) (Kabul Regime), 98–125, 163–64; Constitution (1979), 109; under Soviet occupation, 116–25; zonal administration, 119. See also *Saur* revolution (1978 April Coup)
- Democratic Youth Organization, 119–20
- Deoband School of Theology (India), 178
- Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), 225–26. See also reconstruction; warlords
- dissident movements, 148. See also antistate activities; political unrest
- Dostam, Abdul Rashid, 124, 167–74, 190, 224–25; truce with Northern Alliance, 168–69
- Dost Mohammad (King), foreign relations and aid, 12–13, 15; Battle of Parwan, 13
- drug economy, 229
- Dubs, Adolph (U. S. Ambassador), 109; killed in Kabul, 162
- Durand Agreement (1893), 16–17
- Durand Line, 2, 16, 56–57, 62, 115; and Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, 16
- Durani, Ahmad Shah (Abdali) (king), unites the Pashtun tribes, 11, 12
- Durani tribe, 5, 12
- DynCorp International, 225
- economy, 2; banking and foreign investment, 46–48, 79–84, 105–6; debt, 84; drought, 77; economic development assistance, 24–25, 41–42, 59–60, 79–84; impact of colonialism on, 14; impact of war on, 226. See also agriculture; industries
- education, 17, 21–23; adult literacy programs, 21; educational aid, 80–84; educational reforms, 39, 53, 72, 106, 132; under Habibullah, 17–18;
- Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), 218, 240
- Emirate of Afghanistan, 179. See also Taliban
- Enqilab-e-Kabir-e-Saur* (*Saur* revolution [1978 April coup]), 101–3
- Etemadi, Noor Ahmad (Prime Minister), 76–77
- Eternal Flame (*Shula-e-Jawid*), 147, 161. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- ethnolinguistic communities, 3, 21, 65, 71–72, 168; and government resettlement policies, 53–55
- European Union Election Observation Mission to Afghanistan (EUEOM), 219
- expatriates, 4; influenced by West, 223; and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 232–34
- exploitation of tribal and ethnic rivalries, 5, 14, 16
- external capital infusion, and impact on women's emancipation, 65
- Fahim, Mohammad Qasim, 214–15, 222, 240
- Faisal, Turki al-, 139, 201
- families, 2; and impact of war, 3–4, 91–92; and marriage, 2, 105. See also women
- Farhad, Ghulam Mohammad, 68, 70–72
- Farsiwans, and government resettlement policies, 54
- France, relations with Afghanistan, 20
- fundamentalists. See Islamic fundamentalism
- Gandumak Treaty (1879), 15

- gang of four, 107, 111–13, 116–19; and *Operation Raduga* (Rainbow), 113. *See also* Taraki, Noor Mohammad (president)
- Geneva Accord, 123
- geography and landscape, 1; mineral resources, 82
- Germany, 46–48; and reconstruction, 20, 225
- Ghafoorzai, Abdul Rahim, 190
- Ghilzai Pashtun tribes, 17, 101
- Ghorzang* Party, and Taliban, 188, 189
- Ghubar, Mir Ghulam Mohammad, 50–52
- Gilani, Sayed Ahmad, 5, 123, 137–38.
See also Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan)
- government resettlement policies, 17, 53–54
- Grand Assembly (*Milli Jirgah*), 92. *See also Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of Tribal Elders)
- Grand Assembly of Tribal Leaders (*Loya Jirgah*), 57, 62, 68, 92, 122, 209–12. *See also Milli Jirgah* (Grand Assembly)
- Gruh-e-Haftganah* (Alliance of Seven), 136–37
- Guardians of the Islamic *Jihad* of Afghanistan (*Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 113, 144–45. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Gulabzoi, Sayed Mohammad, 101, 111, 116, 118. *See also* gang of four
- Habibi, Abdul Hay, 50, 53, 64
- Habibullah (king), 17–18, 31–36; *Bacha-e-Saqaw* (the water carrier's son, his father's occupation), 34; and civil war of 1929, 34–35; and education, 17; and religion; uprisings, anti-Habibullah, 33–34
- Hanafi school of Islamic doctrine, 4, 68
- Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan), 74, 137–39. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), 143, 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Harakat-e-Shamal* (Movement of the North), 168
- Haq, Mohammad Zia al-, 162
- Haq, Sami al-, and Taliban, 178
- Hazarajat, 16, 55, 64, 67, 104, 230, 236–38
- Hazaras, 72, 118–19, 170, 174, 209, 216–17; and conflict with Kochi, 64, 67, 104, 236; and government resettlement policies, 54–55; Hazara intellectuals, 142–47, 221; and Hazara nationalism, 141–45; antistate rebellions, 15–16, 46; and slavery, 16–17; and Taliban offensive in Bamiyan, 190–91
- Helmand Treaty (1973), 79
- hijab* (seclusion), 183. *See also* women
- Hikmatyar, Gulbuddin, 123–25, 137–39, 171–77, 185. *See also Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Party of Afghanistan)
- Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]), 6–7, 70, 87–91, 99–125, 132–33, 147, 155, 162, 167; internal conflict between *Khalq* (Masses) and *Parcham* (Banner) factions, 106–7, 114–15, 124–25; 167; repressive measures after *Saur* revolution, 104; and student demonstrations, 132. *See also Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party); *Khalq* (Masses); *Parcham* (Banner); political organizations, pro-Soviet
- Hizb-e-Enqilab-e-Milli* (National Revolution Party), 93
- Hizb-e-Ershad* (Party of Guidance), 130
- Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), 100, 123, 131, 137–40, 159, 168, 219, 237. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Afghanistan* (Communist Party of Afghanistan [CPA]), 153, 161. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan), 144–45, 168–74, 186–87, 210, 215–16. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party), 52, 67, 125, 167–70, 215. *See also* People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA); political organizations, pro-Soviet
- Hizbollah* (Party of God), 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Homeland Party (*Hizb-e-Watan*), 52, 67, 125, 167, 215. *See also* People's

- Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA); political organizations, pro-Soviet
- House of Elders (Senate). *See* National Assembly (*Shura-e-Milli*)
- House of Representatives. *See* National Assembly (*Shura-e-Milli*)
- humanitarian assistance, 230–32
- Ikhwan al-Mustimin* (Islamic Brotherhood), 70, 79, 110, 131, 152
- Imam*, 4, 5, 127–28
- Independent Election Commission, 240–41
- industries, 46, 90–91; communications and film industry, 81; natural gas export, 82–83; oil exploration, 82; private industries growth, 75–76; transportation and roads, 15, 24, 122
- intelligentsia, 3, 65, 91, 145, 147, 159. *See also* social class
- International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), 225, 227; established per Bonn Agreement (2001), 211
- Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), 138, 187, 202, 209, 237–38
- Iran: and Hazara intellectuals, 143–45; Helmand Treaty (1973), 79; relations with Afghanistan, 20, 118–19, 143–44; and refugees from Afghanistan, 203, 239; support of Shia opposition groups, 143–44, 200–203, 238
- Islam, 4–5, 127, 129–30; and Nooristan, 17; role in daily life, 127–30; Sunni-Shia split, 127. *See also* Islamic fundamentalists; Shia faith of Islam; Sunni faith of Islam
- Islamic Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al-Mustimin*), 70, 79, 110, 131, 152. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Islamic Cultural Council of Afghanistan (*Shura-e-Farhangi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 144
- Islamic fundamentalism, 7–8, 115, 124–25, 130–46; Arab states' role in recruiting fighters, 178; and civil war, 175–77; after fall of the Taliban, 205–22; and the Islamic regime, 167–77; religious education in Pakistan and Iran; under Republican regime, 133–34; resistance literature; under Soviet occupation, 134–46; and support from China, 160; and support from United States, 163–65; and the Taliban, 177. *See also* *Jihad*; Taliban
- Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (*Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 129–34, 138, 143, 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Islamic Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 100, 123, 131, 137–40, 159, 168, 219, 237. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan (*Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 74, 137–39. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Islamic *Sharia* law, 127, 138, 178, 213, 182
- Islamic Society of Afghanistan (*Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 131, 138, 215. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahidin (*Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan*), 137, 142–43. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 144–45, 168, 173–74, 186–87, 191, 202, 215–16. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Islamic warriors (*jihadis*), 168, 205, 215
- Islamic Youth Organization (*Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Musalman*), 70, 79, 110, 131, 152
- Ismail, Mohammad, 130, 199, 206, 210
- Ismailis, 4, 5; Ismaili Hazaras, 145
- Italy, and reconstruction, 20, 225
- Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahidin), 137, 142–43. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Ittihad-e-Milli Baray-e-Azadi wa Demokrasi* (National Union for Freedom and Democracy), 121–22
- Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan* (National Salvation Front of Afghanistan), 137, 168, 208. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Jabha-e-Milli-Padar Watan* (National Fatherland Front), 119. *See also* Kabul regime
- Jabha-e-Mubarezin-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan's Revolutionary Mujahidin Front), 155

- Jabha-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National United Front of Afghanistan), 157–58. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Jalalabad, 113, 124
- Jalaluddin Haqqani network, 236–38
- Jamiat-e-Engilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan [RAWA]), 153–54. *See also* Meena; political organizations, revolutionary
- Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Society of Afghanistan), 131, 138, 215. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- jihad* (war), 216; *jihadis* (Islamic warriors), 168, 205, 215
- Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), 214
- Joya, Malalay, 213, 221–22
- Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), 172, 206–7, 215
- Kabul, 206, 226
- Kabul regime (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan [DRA]), 98–125, 163–64; Constitution (1979), 109; under Soviet occupation, 116–25; zonal administration, 119. *See also* *Saur* revolution (1978 April Coup)
- Kabul University, 51, 77, 80
- Kalakani, Abdul Majid (*Majid Agha*), 154–57
- Karmal, Babrak, 59, 70–74, 100–21, 123; and gang of four, 116–19; and purge of *Parcham* members from government, 107–8
- Karzai, Abul Ahad, 208–9
- Karzai, Ahmad Wali, 228
- Karzai, Hamid (interim president 2002, president 2004–), 8, 209–30; elected president, 209–10; and opium trade, 228–29; and Pashtun nationalism, 236
- KGB, 104, 109, 111, 114, 119; and gang of four, 116–17; and *Operation Raduga* (Rainbow), 113
- Khalili, Mohammad Karim, 186, 191, 199, 206, 210, 216
- Khalq* (Masses), 104–8, 124–25, 167. *See also* People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* [PDPA]); *Parcham* (Banner); political organizations, pro-Soviet
- Khan, Abdul Ghafar, 20, 50
- Kharijites, 4
- khashm* (rage), 6, 8, 234
- Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Information Service [KHAD]), 118–19, 121, 157–58, 160. *See also* *Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (Ministry of State Security [WAD])
- Khenjan Treaty, 122
- Khodayi Khidmatgaran* (Servants of God), 20
- Khomeini, Sayyed Rohallah Mosavi, 127–28
- Khorasan*, 153. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Khost rebellion, 25–26
- Khrushchev, Nikita S., 81, 82
- Khui, Abu al-Qasim al-, 127–28
- Kishtmand, Sultan Ali, 107–8, 118–19, 123, 125
- Kochi* (Pashtun nomads), 218, 236; conflicts with Hazaras, 64, 67, 104, 236; and government resettlement policies, 53–54. *See also* social class
- landowners, 91, 105–6. *See also* agriculture; social class
- land reform, 105–6, 227
- language: *Dari* (Persian), 3, 67–69, 77; Pashtu, 3, 42, 45, 53, 57, 64, 67–69, 77–78, 92
- law, Islamic. *See* *Sharia* law
- loans and mortgages, 105–6. *See also* banking and foreign investment
- Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of Tribal Leaders), 57, 62, 68, 92, 122, 209–12. *See also* *Milli Jirgah* (Grand Assembly)
- Loya Jirgah* Commission, 211
- Macnaghten, Sir William Hay, 13, 15
- madrasas* (religious schools), 127–28, 178. *See also* education; Islam
- Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan), 137. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- Mahmood, Shah (prime minister), 44–58; foreign policy, 55–56; Pashtun nationalism, 54, 56–58; Pashtunistan, 58, 60–62
- Mahmoodi, Abd al-Rahman, 50–53
- Maiwandwal, Mohammad Hashim (prime minister), 70, 74–76

- Maliki School of doctrine, 4. *See also* Sunni schools of doctrine
- Mao Tse-tung, 154
- marriage, 23, 27, 105. *See also* women
- Masoud, Ahmad Shah (interim defense minister), 95, 122, 125, 168–72, 187, 190–92; assassinated, 192
- Masoud, Ahmad Wali, 199, 215–16
- Masoud, Ahmad Zia, 199, 216
- Mazari, Abdul Ali, 143–45, 176, 186, 246; and Hazara nationalism, 144–45. *See also* *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan)
- media, 23; communications and film industry, 81; newspapers, 15, 17, 32, 41–42, 51, 70–72, 131, 159; radio, 26, 56–58, 62, 79, 94, 96, 107, 112, 157, 183, 197
- Meena (founder of RAWA), 160, 161. *See also* *Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan)
- migration, outward, of families, 3–4, 91–92
- Milli Jirgah* (Grand Assembly), 92. *See also* *Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of Tribal Elders)
- mineral resources, 82
- Ministry of State Security (*Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* [WAD]), 121
- Mirza, Iskander, and Afghanistan-Pakistan Confederation, 60. *See also* Pakistan
- Moghul rule, 11
- Mohammadi, Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi, 72, 74, 137–39, 172. *See also* *Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan)
- Mohaqiq, Mohammad, 215–17, 221, 236
- Mojaddadi, Sebghatullah (interim president), 59, 60, 137–38, 169–71. *See also* *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan* (National Salvation Front of Afghanistan)
- Morrison-Knudsen Company (MKC), 53
- Movement of the North (*Harakat-e-Shamal*), 168, 172
- Muhammad, The Prophet, 4
- mujahidin*, 167, 201–2. *See also* *Jihad*; Northern Alliance (NA); Taliban; warlords
- Mullahs* (clerics), 4, 13, 127–28; opposition to women's education; opposition to women's unveiling, 65; viewed as threat by Kabul regime, 110, 120. *See also* social class
- Muslims: Shia (*See* Shia faith of Islam); Sunni (*See* Sunni faith of Islam)
- Naderi, Mansoor, 174, 191
- Nadi Ali District, 53, and government resettlement policies, 54
- Nadir, Mohammad (king), 11, 35–48; assassinated, 43; foreign policy, 42–43; and media, 41–42; modernization, 40–43; and Pashtun nationalism, 38
- Nahzat-e-Madani-e-Afghanistan* (Civil Movement of Afghanistan), 221
- Nahzat-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National Movement of Afghanistan), 215
- Naim, Mohammad, 58–59, 62, 91, 93, 97–98, 101
- Najibullah (president), 107, 121–25, 167, 188, 202; policy of national reconciliation, 107–8
- narcotics trafficking, 226–29; narco-farms, 228; narcotecture, 227
- National Assembly (*Shura-e-Milli*), 50–51, 69, 74–76, 102, 132, 221–24, 234
- National Club (*Club-e-Milli*), role in Mohammad Daoud's rise to power, 58
- National Fatherland Front (*Jabba-e-Milli-Padar Watan*), 119. *See also* Kabul regime
- National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (*Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 137. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (*Junbish-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 172, 206–7, 215
- national liberation movement, 138, 154
- National Movement of Afghanistan (*Nahzat-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan*), 215
- National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and National Security Law, 223–24. *See also* warlords; Karzai, Hamid
- National Revolution Party (*Hizb-e-Enqilab-e-Milli*), 93
- National Salvation Front of Afghanistan (*Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan*), 137, 168, 208. *See also* political organizations, Sunni
- National Union for Freedom and Democracy (*Ittihad-e-Milli Baray-e-Azadi wa Demokrasi*), 121–22

- National United Front of Afghanistan (*Jabha-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan*), 157
- National Unity (*Wahdat-e-Milli*), 70–71
- nation building, 23–24, 85–86, 225, 241–46. *See also* modernization programs under rulers and heads of state
- NATO, 211, 241–45
- natural gas export, 82, 83
- Neo-Democratic Organization of Afghanistan (*Sazman-e-Demokratik-e-Navin-e-Afghanistan*), 70, 147, 149, 151, 153
- newspapers, 41–42, 51, 70–72, 131, 159. *See also* media
- Non-Aligned Movement, 93
- nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 230–32
- Nooristan, 17
- Nooristani, Abdul Qadir, 101, 157
- Northern Alliance (NA), 198–99, 205–6, 210, 212, 214–15; internal conflict, 189–90
- Oakley, Robert, 195. *See also* pipeline
- Obama, Barack, 194, 239
- oil exploration, 82
- Omar, Mohammad, *Mullah*, 179–80. *See also* Taliban
- Operation Agat* (Agate), 116–17
- Operation Enduring Freedom* (military operation), 206, 241–43
- opium cultivation, 185, 226–29. *See also* agriculture; narcotics trafficking
- Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan (*Sazman-e-Paikar Baray-e-Azadi-e-Afghanistan*) (*Paikar*), 153. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class (*Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaqa-e-Kargar*), 153, 154. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Organization for the Protection of the Security of Afghanistan (*Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Aidara* [AGSA]), 110, 113
- Organization of the True Patriots (*Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei* [SAWO]), 153, 157. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed (*Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin*), 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Pakistan, 67, 109, 119–20, 133, 142, 207; and Afghanistan-Pakistan confederation, 2, 60 (*See also* Pashtunistan); and Durand Line (1893), 115; Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), 138, 187, 202, 209, 237–38; Pakistan-Iran Involvement in Afghanistan, 200–203; Pashtunistan, 59–60, 94–95, 115, 175; relations with Afghanistan, 16, 57, 62–63, 79, 115; support of Islamic fundamentalism, 123–24, 138, 162, 200–201; treatment of refugees, 239
- Paktiya rebellion, 28, 119, 136. *See also* antistate activities
- Parcham* (Banner), 71, 73, 86–87, 89, 101–8, 124–25, 167. *See also* People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* [PDPA]); *Khalq* (Masses); political organizations, pro-soviet
- parliamentary elections, 72, 122, 213, 218–20
- Party of God (*Hizbollah*), 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Party of Guidance (*Hizb-e-Ershad*), 130
- Parwan Battle, 13
- Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Guardians of the Islamic *Jihad* of Afghanistan), 113, 144–45. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Pashtu* language, 64, 69, 77, 78, 235, 236
- Pashtun nationalism, 38, 43–46, 50, 54–58, 235–36; impact on other ethnolinguistic communities, 45–46, 77–78; and Pashtunistan, 2, 58, 60–62, 81–82, 115, 175; and Radio Pashtunistan, 94–95. *See also* Afghanistan-Pakistan confederation
- Pashtu Tulana (Pashtu Association), 45
- Pashtuns, 11–12, 16, 54, 208; Peshawar Group, and Bonn Agreement (2001), 209
- peasantry, 59–60, 105–6; and government resettlement policies, 53–54. *See also* social class
- People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan* [PDPA]), 6–7, 70, 87–91, 99–125, 132–33, 147, 155, 162, 167; internal conflict between *Khalq* (Masses) and *Parcham*

- (Banner) factions, 106–7, 114–15, 124–25; 167; repressive measures after *Saur* revolution, 104; and student demonstrations, 132. See also *Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party); *Khalq* (Masses); *Parcham* (Banner); political organizations, pro-Soviet
- People's Liberation Organization of Afghanistan (*Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsb-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* [SAMA]), 153, 154–58. See also political organizations, revolutionary; *Jabha-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National United Front of Afghanistan)
- Persian language (*Dari*), 3, 67–69, 77
- pipeline, 193–94. See also Oakley, Robert
- political organizations, pro-Soviet:
Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e-Afghanistan (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA]), 6, 70, 87–91, 99–125, 162; *Hizb-e-Watan* (Homeland Party), 52, 125, 167, 215. See also political organizations, pro-Soviet
- political organizations, revolutionary, 129–31, 151–56, 161; *Hizb-e-Kamunist-e-Afghanistan* (Communist Party of Afghanistan), 153, 161; *Jabha-e-Muttahid-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan* (National United Front of Afghanistan), 157–58.; *Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan [RAWA]), 153–54, 160–61, 172; *Khorasan*, 153; *Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsb-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* (Peoples Liberation Organization of Afghanistan [SAMA]), 153, 154; *Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Mutaraqi* (Progressive Youth Organization [PYO]), 149, 151, 153; *Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaga-e-Kargar* (Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class), 153, 154; *Sazman-e-Paikar Baray-e-Azadi-e-Afghanistan* (Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan), 153; *Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan Liberation Organization [ALO]), 153, 154, 159; *Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei* (Organization of the True Patriots [SAWO]), 153, 157
- political organizations, Shia, 124, 140, 141, 145; *Harakat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), 143, 145; *Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan), 144–45, 168, 170, 173–74, 186–87, 191, 202, 210, 215–16; *Hizbollah* (Party of God), 145; *Pasdaran-e-Jihad-e-Islami* (Guardians of the Islamic Movement), 113, 144–45; *Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin* (Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed), 145; *Sazman-e-Nasr* (Victory Organization), 143–44; *Shura-e-Itfaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan), 144, 145
- political organizations, Sunni, 136–37, 146; *Harakat-e-Enqilabi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan), 74, 137–39; *Hizb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), 100, 123, 131, 137–38, 140, 159, 168, 219, 237; *Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahidin), 137, 142–43; *Jabha-e-Milli-e-Nijat-e-Afghanistan* (National Salvation Front of Afghanistan), 137, 168, 208; *Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Society of Afghanistan), 131, 138, 215; *Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan), 137
- political organizations: *Afghan Millat* (Afghan Nation), 70–71, 122, 178
- political unrest, 53, 105–6, 148. See also antistate activities; *khashm* (rage)
- poppy cultivation (opium), 185, 226–29. See also agriculture
- postindependence period: under Amanullah, 19–31; under Habibullah and others, 32–
- presidential elections, 213–18, 239–41, 246; and European Union Election Observation Mission to Afghanistan (EUEOM), 219
- private industries growth, 75–76
- private sector growth, 90–91
- Progressive Youth Organization (*Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Mutaraqi* [PYO]), 147, 153. See also political organizations, revolutionary

- Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), 225, 243
- Puzanov, Alexander, 101, 107, 112
- Qandahar, 12, 207–8, 211
- Qanooni, Mohammad Younus, 211, 212, 215, 216, 221
- Rabbani, Burhanuddin (interim president), 95, 131, 133, 137, 171–76. See also *Jamiat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Society of Afghanistan) radical Islam. See Islamic fundamentalism radio, 57, 79, 94, 183. See also media Rahman, Abd al- (king), 16, 17, 35–36 Ratebzad, Anahita, 72–74 Rawalpindi Treaty (1919), 19 Reagan, Ronald, 164 rebellions. See antistate activities reconstruction, 20, 225–36; and *Afghanistan Compact*, 226; warlords, and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), 225–26 Red Shirt Movement, 20, 30, 50 refugees, 109, 120, 138, 203, 239. See also social class religion. See Islam Republican regime (1973–78), 87–101, 153. See also Daoud, Mohammad Republic of Afghanistan. See Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (*Jamiat-e-Enqilabi-e-Zanan-e-Afghanistan* [RAWA]), 153–54, 160–61, 172. See also Meena; political organizations, revolutionary Revolutionary Council, 109, 120, 141 Revolutionary Council for the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan (*Shura-e-Enqilabi-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 141–42, 144, 168, 179, 180, 181. See also *ulama* (religious scholars) Revolutionary Group (*Shula-e-Jawid, Grub-e-Enqilabi* [RG]), 153. See also political organizations, revolutionary *Rohaniyat-e-Nawin* (neoclericalism), 140 ruling elites, 3, 12, 48, 65, 85–87. See also social class Russian war veterans, 6, 7, 122
- sakhtamanba-e-poodari* (narcotecture), 227. See also narcotics trafficking
- Salang tunnel, 122
- Saudi Arabia, and recruitment of *Wahabi* Arabs, 192
- Saur* revolution (1978 April Coup), 87–88, 101–14, 121, 162. See also Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA)
- Sayyaf, Abdulrab Rasul, 131, 137, 139, 221, 213. See also *Ittihad-e-Islami-e-Mujahidin-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahidin)
- Sayyed*, 13, 130
- Sazman-e-Azadi-Bakhsh-e-Mardom-e-Afghanistan* (Peoples Liberation Organization of Afghanistan [SAMA]), 153, 154–58. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Sazman-e-Demokratik-e-Nawin-e-Afghanistan* (Neo-Democratic Organization of Afghanistan), 70, 147, 153
- Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Muselman* (Islamic Youth Organization), 70, 79, 110, 131, 152
- Sazman-e-Jawanan-e-Mutaraqi* (Progressive Youth Organization [PYO]), 147, 153. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Sazman-e-Mubariza Baray-e-Azadi-e-Tabaqa-e-Kargar* (Organization for the Liberation of the Working Class), 153, 154. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin* (Organization of Warriors of the Dispossessed), 145. See also political organizations, Shia
- Sazman-e-Nasr-e-Enqilab-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Victory Organization for Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan), 143–44. See also political organizations, Shia
- Sazman-e-Paikar Baray-e-Azadi-e-Afghanistan* (Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan, *Paikar*), 153. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Sazman-e-Rahay-e-Afghanistan* (Afghanistan Liberation Organization [ALO]), 153, 159. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Sazman-e-Watanparastan-e-Waqiei* (Organization of the True Patriots [SAWO]), 153, 157. See also political organizations, revolutionary
- Schweich, Thomas, 228
- secret police. See *Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Aidara* (Organization for

- the Protection of the Security of Afghanistan [AGSA]); *Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Information Service [KHAD]); *Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (Ministry of State Security [WAD]); Workers Intelligence Agency (*Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* [KAM])
- secular revolutionary movements, 146–56; and *Sayum-e-Agrab*, 148; under Soviet occupation, 156–61
- Seven-Party Alliance, 201
- Shafiq, Mohammad Musa (prime minister), 78–79, 84–85; executed, 104
- Sharia* law, 127, 138, 178, 213, 182; and Taliban
- Shia faith of Islam, 127–29, 132, 144
- Shirpoor military garrison, 227
- Shuja (king), 12–15; relations with Britain, 12
- Shula-e-Jawid* (Eternal Flame), 147, 149, 151, 153, 161. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Shula-e-Jawid, Grub-e-Enqilabi* (Revolutionary Group [RG]), 153. *See also* political organizations, revolutionary
- Shura-e-Enqilabi-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Council for the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan), 141–42, 144, 168, 179, 180, 181. *See also* *ulama* (religious scholars)
- Shura-e-Farhangi-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Cultural Council of Afghanistan), 144
- Shura-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan), 144, 145. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Shura-e-Jihad*, 170
- Shura-e-Milli* (National Assembly), 50–51, 69, 74–76, 102, 132, 221–24, 234
- Shura-e-Wilayati* (provincial councils), 218
- Sikhs, 4
- slavery, 17, abolished by 1923 Constitution, 21
- social class: blue-collar workers; intelligentsia, 3, 65, 91, 145, 147, 159; landowners, 91, 105–6; *Mullahs* (clerics), 4, 13, 120, 127–28; nomads, 218, 230; peasantry, 59–60, 105–6; refugees, 109, 120, 138, 234; ruling elites, 3, 12, 65, 85–87
- Soraya, Queen, 27–28
- Soviet Union. *See* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR
- Soviet-backed regime (Kabul regime), 108, 111, 119, 124, 125
- State Information Service (*Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* [KHAD]), 118, 119, 121, 156, 157, 160
- state security agencies. *See* *Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Aidara* (Organization for the Protection of the Security of Afghanistan [AGSA]); *Khedamat-e Aittilaat-e Dawlat* (State Information Service [KHAD]); *Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (Ministry of State Security [WAD]); Workers Intelligence Agency (*Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* [KAM])
- statism, 59–73
- student demonstrations, 74–75, 148, 151–52; and *Sayum-e-Agrab*, 148. *See also* antistate activities
- students, 80, 81, 83, 84, 151; and Students' Union, 51
- Sufi*, 5
- Sunni faith of Islam, 4, 5, 16, 127–29; Sunni schools of Islamic Doctrine (basis of civil and criminal laws): Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafii, 4. *See also* Islam
- talib*, 177
- Taliban, 125, 139, 167, 177, 205–9; and *Amri Bilmarof wa Nahi al-Munkir* (Bureaucracy for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), 182–83; exploitation of tribal and ethnic rivalries, 177, 180 (*See also* Afghanistan civil war); fall from power, 8, 205–9, 225; funding, 192; and *Ghorzang* Party, 188, 189; interpretation of Islam, 178–83; oppression of women, 183–84; and pipeline, 193; religious discrimination, 177, 180, 182; resurgence, 236–41; Taliban system of governance, 179–92; U.S. aid, 192–93; U.S. policy toward, 192. *See also* al-Qaeda; Islamic fundamentalism; *Mullahs* (clerics); Omar, Mohammad;
- Tanai, Shah Nawaz, 122, 124, 188
- tanzim* (resistance groups), 136–39
- Tanzim-e-Dawat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*, 221

- Taraki, Noor Mohammad (president), 50, 70–73, 86–93, 100–12; opposition to policies, 135–36
- Timur (Tamerlane) (king), 12
- traditionalists, 129, 138, 141
- Transitional Authority, 211, 213
- transportation and roads, 15, 24, 122. *See also* industries
- treaties and agreements: Bonn Agreement (2001), 209–11; Durand Agreement (1893), 16; Gandumak Treaty (1879), 15; Helmand Treaty (1973), 79; Rawalpindi Treaty (1919), 19
- tribal and regional conflict, as cause of Afghanistan civil war, 174–77
- Turkey, relations with Afghanistan, 19–20
- ulama* (religious scholars), 127–29, 141–42. *See also* Revolutionary Council for the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan (*Shura-e-Enqilabi-e-Ittifaq-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*)
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR: aid to Afghanistan, 81–84, 96, 108; client parties, 6, 7, 70–74, 87–96, 99–101 (*See also Hizb-e-Demokratik-e-Khalq-e Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA])); Geneva Accord and Soviet Troop withdrawal, 123; and *Operation Agat* (Agate), 116–17; opposition to occupation of Afghanistan, 119–20, 156–61; relations with Afghanistan, 19, 58–59, 62–63, 96–101; Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–89), 6, 114–18, 122–25, 156–60; zonal administration, 119. *See also* Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Kabul regime)
- United Nations, 56, 174; United Nations Security Council, 211, 225
- United States: agricultural development projects in Afghanistan, 81, 83; and Bonn Agreement (2001), 209–11; economic assistance, 80–81, 84, 96–98; educational assistance, 80; relations with Afghanistan, 55–56, 61–62, 87–88; and Northern Alliance, 195, 198; and *Operation Enduring Freedom* (military operation), 206, 241–43; support of Islamic fundamentalists, 7–8, 162–65, 192–93, 205–11; and the Taliban, 192, 207; United States occupation, 8, 205–41; United States-NATO stabilization efforts, 225, 241–45
- Unocal, 193–94
- uprisings. *See* antistate activities
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 165, 193, 198–201, 207
- Uzbeks, and government resettlement policies, 54
- Victory Organization for Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan (*Sazman-e-Nasr-e-Enqilab-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan*), 143–44. *See also* political organizations, Shia
- Wahabi* militants, 176, 191–93
- Wahdat-e-Milli* (National Unity), 70–71
- Wali, Abdul, 65–66, 88, 123, 148
- wagf* (income), 120
- war, civil. *See* civil war
- war (*jihad*), 216; *jihadis* (Islamic warriors), 168, 205, 215
- warlords, 185, 199, 213, 215, 217–18, 223–24; and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), 225–26
- Wilson, Charles, 165
- Wizarat-e-Amniyat-e-Dawlat* (Ministry of State Security [WAD]), 121
- women: 17, 21, 132, 139, 140, 222; on the battlefield, 6; education, 132; external capital infusion, role in women's emancipation, 65; laws governing marriage, 21, 23, 105–6; participation in political activities, 139, 169, 218–22; as property, 2; social reforms regarding women, 21; under the Taliban, 183–84; unveiling, opposition by mullahs, 64, 65. *See also* marriage
- worker strikes, 148–51. *See also* antistate activities; blue-collar workers
- Workers Intelligence Agency (*Da Kargarano Amniyati Muassisa* [KAM]), 113, 118
- Yaqoob, Mohammad, 15
- Yousuf, Mohammad (Prime Minister), 66–74, 148
- Zabuli, Abdul Majid, 58, 102
- Zahir, Abdul, 66, 77, 78
- Zahir, Mohammad (king), 51, 63, 65–86, 123; *Baba-e-Millat* (Father of the Nation), 212, 214; exile, 87–90, 93–94; and Rome Group, (Bonn Agreement [2001]), 209
- Zahra, 147
- Zaidi, Muntather, 243
- zakat* (tax), 120